

The Luxury Cuisine  
& Travel Magazine

# Good Things

ISSUE SIX  
WINTER  
2014  
£4.99

Dining out • Entertaining at home • Travel & culture

GUEST EDITED  
BY CHEF WYN MA

Introducing our new  
Associate Editor  
ANJULA DEVI

Thailand  
A fresh look at the  
land of smiles

THE SECRET  
KITCHENS OF  
BUENOS AIRES

## SHOW STOPPING CELEBRATORY DESSERTS

FESTIVE FOOD FROM  
AROUND THE  
WORLD

OVER **100**  
RECIPES

From top chefs  
including Duck  
& Waffle's  
Dan Doherty...

Sipping in  
Samos  
With METAXA

Good Things



The  
Lowdown  
on Barrel-aged  
Cocktails

Not  
**So** Cold  
Turkey

What to do with all of  
those festive leftovers

**OVERDONE**

The contenders set to replace  
the tired gourmet burger

Pairing Cheese  
with Beer

Buttered rum!

Party spread

Impressive asian tapas

Korea's Hottest Kimchi

The perfect yule log recipe • Pumpkin Risotto • Cranberry & Bacon Jam • Miso Cod • Mezcal Christmas Pudding

THE GOOD THINGS DINING GUIDE

OUR PICK OF OVER **100 RESTAURANTS** INCLUDING **BRAND NEW OPENINGS**



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# Highlights



## DINING

Even those who pay scant attention to food trends cannot escape the ubiquitous gourmet burger. But Britain's street food scene offers more inspired global eating options. On page 47, Thomas Hobbs presents the new contenders for the burger king's crown.



## ENTERTAINING

Christmas is coming, but that's not the only winter festival that demands a fine feast. On page 72, Zoe Perrett presents the ultimate seasonal celebratory banquet, with recipes from multiple countries and cultures.



## TRAVEL & CULTURE

As the days darken, it's high time we brought a little sunshine into your life. On page 148, Nick Clarke takes you on an island-hopping gastronomic tour of Thailand; his vibrant guide sure to inspire serious wanderlust.

# From the team

Winter. One could look at all the bad bits, like the tempestuous weather and the shortened days, but not for nothing are we called 'Good Things'. We prefer to focus on the elements of the season that make us very happy indeed; and, happily, those are both many and varied.

Even the worst winter woes can't detract from the fact that party season is in full swing, bringing with it the chance to feast on celebratory foods from as many different cultures and creeds as our packed social calendars will allow for. We're already planning elegant Asian tapas gatherings (page 66) and relaxed charcuterie lunches with friends (page 60).

A full-on feast comes in the form of a lavish multicultural meal incorporating traditional festive dishes from all over the globe (page 72). We're more than happy to cook it, but someone else can take care of the washing up. Feeling thirsty? Us too – so we take a look at Indian wine (page 100), barrel-aged cocktails (page 94), and a weighty spirit (page 108).

Another thing that makes winter so wonderful in our world is the seemingly endless – and surely guiltless? – opportunity to satisfy our collective sweet tooth. Need convincing? Turn to page 86 and discover a dozen decadent bûches de Noël. On page 138, our table groans under the weight of our world dessert banquet; with 14 recipes to enable you to replicate each and every dish at home.

If you need a shot of sunshine, we've plenty to take your mind off the chill temperatures and get things heating up nicely in the kitchen. In our travel section (page 113), we're inviting you to dip a toe into Thailand; sip METAXA in Samos; discover the hidden restaurants of Buenos Aires; and explore exotic soups from far-flung destinations.

That's by no means all. We also take a wander around Chinatown with one of that London neighbourhood's most colourful characters (page 132), present an alphabet of Icelandic delicacies for you to devour (page 154), and tell the inspiring story of a British boy who spent a year cooking absolutely everywhere (page 32).

We're also pleased to announce that the veritable chef Anjula Devi joins our growing team as Associate Editor to share her stories, memories, and innovative Indian recipes in a new monthly column.

Monthly? That's right – we saved the biggest good thing until last. The next edition sees Good Things expand to a monthly frequency to bring you many, many more of the not-so-usual food features you tell us you've come to expect from our magazine.

Winter. Forget the down sides. Focus on the Good Things.

## The Good Things Team

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# In this EDITION



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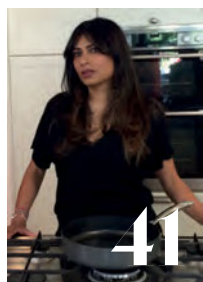
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Joel Porter is insistent that a festive cheeseboard is a must; yet must never be predictable. His beer-paired selection offers an altogether more unusual option

### 41 MY LIFE ON A PLATE – NISHA KATONA

Former barrister Nisha takes Zoe Perrett on her journey from Youtube culinary hero to restaurateur; explaining what drove her to share unadulterated, home-style Indian classics with the world

### 47 OVERDONE

We've had our fill of posh burgers. Thomas Hobbs claims that the burger king is dead and examines the global street eats that are contenders for its crown

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If you're food-focused, you need any event to be a gourmet gathering. Deena Kakaya says it's simple if you follow hers and Dhruv Baker's recipes for some impressive, spicy bites

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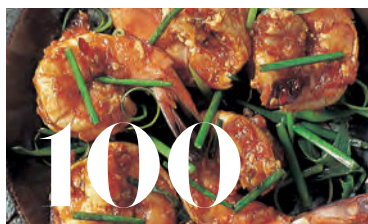
Vodka works well with food, as any Russian food fan would tell you. Andre Jackson learns what to eat with the clean, crisp spirit from Heavy Water – a company that knows only too well



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Good Things has scoured the country to bring you a collection of diverse venues that you'll want to return to time and time again

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### 194 WIN!

If you're in it to win it, we're giving away a great selection of fine gourmet prizes to please any food-lover



# Contributors



## GUEST EDITOR - WYN MA

When our last Guest Editor Cyrus Todiwala nominated Wyn as his predecessor, we were delighted. Hearing how Green Papaya's Vietnamese chef has opened his mind and heart to the food of his adopted land provided ample inspiration for the issue; not least leading us to edibly explore how various cultures celebrate Christmas and other wintertime celebrations.

Meet Wyn in our Food Chain feature, and discover why he has nominated young British super-chef Dan Doherty as the heir to his throne for the next issue of Good Things...



## BRONTË AURELL

The owner of the acclaimed ScandiKitchen is credited with introducing the Scandinavian open sandwich to lunching Londoners. In this issue, the keen cook and food writer shares some classic Christmas recipes.



## JACOB KENEDY

British-born Jacob learnt and honed his craft at London's Moro and San Francisco's Boulevard. Since 2008, the chef has been introducing Londoners to authentic Italian regional food at Bocca di Lupo.



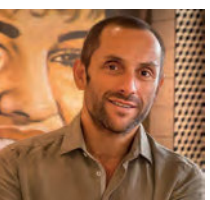
## KANTHI THAMMA

Having cooked his way across South India, Kanthi is well-appointed to share regional Indian recipes for the dishes he now creates as head chef and co-owner of Brighton's Curry Leaf Cafe.



## DHRUV BAKER

The recipes Dhruv shares from his cookbook 'SPICE' exemplify the chef's global approach to spicing – a theme which is much in evidence at his new food pub, The Jolly Gardeners.



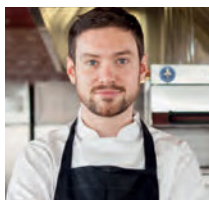
## TONY KITOUS

Restaurateur Tony opened a soda and sandwich stall in Algeria aged 8. At 18, London captured his heart; and, now, the capital's diners have taken his 'Comptoir Libanais' brand to theirs.



## DAVID THOMPSON

The worldwide, widely-lauded chef is known as an absolute authority on Thai cuisine. His esteemed cookbooks 'Thai Food' and 'Thai Street Food' capture the country's vibrancy, as does his own cooking.



## DAN DOHERTY

Chef and cookbook author Dan is often sky-high, cooking on the 40th floor at London's Duck & Waffle. His latest project is the 'Chefs of Tomorrow' initiative – find out more next issue.



## GIORGIO LOCATELLI

Giorgio is one of the world's finest Italian culinary talents; showcasing his skills at London's Locanda Locatelli, in cookbooks, and on-screen. This issue includes festive recipes from his Sicilian explorations.



## BEN TISH

The Salt Yard restaurant group's executive director is known for Spanish-ish, Italian-ish tapas; exemplified by his recipes in this issue. You'll often encounter Ben on television and at food festivals.



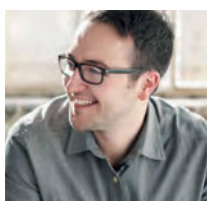
## NISHA KATONA

Through Youtube, Nisha is known for making authentic Indian food accessible. Her first restaurant, Liverpool-based Mowgli, opens diners' eyes to traditional and frill-free Indian cooking, served with wit and warmth.



## MEHERNOSH MODY

La Porte des Indes' executive chef has been at the helm of the London restaurant since it opened in 1996, creating an innovative regional Indian menu with unique Indo-French flourishes.



## WILL TORRENT

The much-lauded professional pastry chef has been working with chocolate since he was just 16 years old, and has just authored 'Chocolate at Home'; from which he shares his stolen recipe online.

# Good Things

## MEET THE TEAM

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## DRESDEN CHRISTMAS MARKET

*27th November - 24th December*

Christmas markets abound in Germany, but Dresden's is the country's longest-established, dating back to 1434. The market's official name, 'Striezelmarkt', comes from a traditional sweet festive bread which evolved into the 'Dresden Christstollen' for which the city is so known. Focal points of the market are the world's largest nutcracker, and a 14-metre tall Christmas pyramid. Cosy chalets vend all manner of goods, from comestibles, to Lusatia pottery, to hand-blown Christmas decorations. You can watch many of the artisans in action as you walk the streets snacking, drinking, and soaking up the atmosphere. A dedicated Stollen Festival occurs on the Saturday before Advent's second Sunday.

*Turn to page 142 to learn more about stollen and make your own from our authentic recipe*









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## MEVLANA

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*7th - 17th December*

Taking place in Konya, this Turkish festival is founded around the country's whirling dervishes. The male dancers are clad in white robes and tall hats, and the celebrations honour the teachings of 13th-century poet Rumi, who proposed the notion of physical spinning as a means to achieving inner peace. Mevlana has been marked for three-quarters of a millennium, the final night dedicated to commemorating Rumi's so-called 'wedding night' with God in 1273. As they spin, the dervishes point the right arm to heaven and the left to the earth, literally putting Rumi's poetry – 'blazing in blind ecstasy, drowned in God and drunk on love,' in motion.





# JUNKANOO

*26th December*

A long winter walk is a traditional Boxing Day pursuit for many Britons, but in the Bahamas, the day's activities are altogether more energetic. Junkanoo is a spectacular parade that occurs on many of the islands in the area; the largest of which is in Nassau. Some believe the word is derived from the French 'gens inconnus', meaning 'unknown' or 'masked people'. The modern-day festival carries on traditions established during the 16th-century, when slaves were permitted to leave plantations and return to their families for the holidays. Today's celebrations are on an altogether larger and more organised scale, with costumes, live music and dance displays.





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# RÉVEILLON

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*31st December*

In Rio de Janeiro, 2 million revellers hit Copacabana beach on a single night to welcome in the New Year. People don their glad rags, but the classic black tie is not in evidence. In terms of attire, Réveillon is primarily a white night – the colour representing peace and positivity; with primary colours further promoting romance (red), health (blue), and prosperity (yellow). On land, there's music and dance, but the ocean becomes almost as busy as the beach; awash with offerings for Iemanjá, the Candomblé goddess of the ocean. At midnight, almost 25 tons of fireworks are set off from a series of barges, lighting up the night for 20 minutes.



# QUÉBEC WINTER CARNIVAL

*31st January - 16th February*

What is now the largest winter carnival in the world was first founded in 1893, in order to reinvigorate the Canadian economy - along with the flagging spirits of the people in the depths of a long cold winter. The occasion may only have been made official in 1955, but the tradition of a merry pre-Lenten gathering dates back to the first French colonies. There is no shortage of things to see and do - from spectacular illuminated ice palaces to parades; ice canoe races to snow sculptures. An inexpensive 'effigy' pendant funds the festivities and allows you to enjoy the full 17-day programme.









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## 24. Team favourites

Andre Jackson eats Indian food at Curry Leaf Cafe in Brighton and Brazilian at Brixton's Carioca

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## 38. Cheese bored?

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## 41. My life on a plate Nisha Katona

Zoe Perrett learns how one woman went from courtroom to holding court in her own restaurant

## 47. Overdone!

We've had our fill of posh burgers. Thomas Hobbs examines the most exciting alternative options

# DINING EXPERIENCES

Share your experiences and suggestions of other restaurants for us to review via



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In pursuit of the mildest winter possible, we've been sampling some exotic food in an attempt to transport ourselves to warmer climes through cuisine. In these pages you'll find Brazilian, Sri Lankan, Indian and Vietnamese; and meet the boy who cooked his way around the world. We also reveal the hot new street eats set to take the burger's kingly crown, get the lowdown on the beer and cheese you need this Christmas, and share a show-stopping recipe from Duck & Waffle's Dan Doherty.





## THE CARNIVAL COMES TO BRIXTON

Written by **ANDRE JACKSON**

*Standing out in Brixton Village is a challenge for even the most visionary of restaurateurs and chefs. Going up against the existing established 'golden triangle of trendiness' that is Honest Burger, Franco Manca, and Champagne + Fromage is no mean feat. But if there was ever a cuisine capable of sticking out its chest and announcing itself in the discerning foodie haven that is Brixton Village, it is Brazilian.*

*Having changed its name from the slightly confusing Prima Donna to Carioca late last year, the rebrand and a new menu has breathed new life into this exciting venture. Named after the vivacious people of Rio de Janeiro (the word originally meaning 'white man's house'), Carioca is fast earning a reputation for serving fine Brazilian food.*

### THE DÉCOR

Those who have visited Brixton Village will be aware that the surroundings are not what make any of these restaurants. Spaces are small and seating can often be rather intimate. While this might not be everyone's cup of tea, it does add a certain charm to the place as a whole. Carioca actually manages to use the small space quite well, offering seating both inside the restaurant and outside in the market street, with little need for awkward table-sharing. As expected, Carioca is laced with bright colours and dreamy images of Brazil, but the lack of emphasis on the décor as noted allows for more concentration on what's really important: the food.

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[twitter.com/CariocaBrixton](https://twitter.com/CariocaBrixton)

*Average price for a meal for two with cocktails: £70*

*Check out an exclusive Brazilian Christmas recipe from Carioca on page 77*

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## THE MENU

Brazilian cuisine is often accused of only catering for the carnivores amongst us, validated by the fact that there is no word for 'vegetarian' in Portuguese. But Brazilian head chef Lucy has made sure that Carioca does offer a few veggie alternatives (not that we tried any, with so much quality meat on offer). Beginning with three starter plates all perfect for sharing, we dove into beef empanadas, Bahia fish cakes and cured Portuguese chorizo from the grill. Each plate radiated warmth, with a light spicing for the more delicate British palate. The chorizo had been grilled in honey and was served with warm sourdough bread (not traditionally Brazilian but extremely trendy) and complemented the myriad flavours that came from the Jamaican patty-like empanadas and the fragrant fishcakes.

The meat frenzy really began with the main courses, where we opted for the chargrilled beef spare ribs with Brazilian churrasco sauce, and Carioca's signature dish - the fantastic feijoada. The ribs, served with cassava potato chips, are slow-cooked in the oven and finished in a charcoal grill with a touch of applewood-smoked salt. They are meaty, flavoursome and satisfyingly filling, but the show was well and truly stolen by the national dish of Brazil, that feijoada. A stew of beans, pork ribs, chorizo, lean pork and beef, it's a true carnivore's dream. Accompanied by greens, plenty of rice, and a dusting of spiced farofa (toasted cassava flour), it's a dish that gives you every element in every single forkful - a real stew, bursting with earthy flavours from the beans and the smoky pork. With just the slightest bit of room left for dessert, a slice of one of co-owner Maurilo's homemade cakes was a nice personal note to end the meal on.



## THE DRINKS

The BYOB policy adopted by much of Brixton Village is in operation here, so they've kept the alcohol options simple - offering a typically Brazilian caipirinha, cocktail, which was sharp and strong in equal measure. Other than that, the standard wine and beer offerings are available.

## THE SERVICE

Quick, friendly, and lively best describes the service at Carioca. Waiters are keen to walk you through the dishes and give you a bit of background as to how they're made and what to pair them with. It's surprising and commendable that they're able to be so attentive when there are only two serving at a time and it's often busy.

## THE VERDICT

Perfect for a quick lunch or a long dinner, Carioca is a welcome addition to the ever-changing foodie landscape that is Brixton Village. High-quality Brazilian food is strangely difficult to come by in London, making Carioca all the more enticing. Offering traditional dishes in a homely environment, this restaurant has more than made up for its national football team's failures in Brazil last summer.





# CURRY LEAF CAFE

## CONTEMPORARY INDIAN STREET FOOD BY THE SEASIDE

Written by **ANDRE JACKSON**

*The days of old-school 'white tablecloth' Indian restaurants seem to be on the wane, as more contemporary, trend-influenced Indian eateries arrive on the scene. Curry Leaf Cafe offers a completely fresh take on the Indian dining experience.*

Having been open a mere six months, the restaurant is already making quite the name for itself, receiving the silver award in the 'Best Newcomer' category at the recent Brighton & Hove Food and Drink Awards. A fantastic achievement considering that Curry Leaf Cafe wouldn't even exist if it wasn't for an unfortunate personal incident which led the mastermind behind the venue, former food critic Euan Sey, to meet chef Kanthi Kiran Thamma. 'I'd just split up with my girlfriend and decided to rent out my spare room. Kanthi moved in and started making me homemade South Indian dishes, stuff I'd never tried before, and it was like a lightbulb went on,' says Euan.

Thamma's kitchen pedigree includes cheffing roles at Brighton's award-winning Indian restaurant The Chilli

Pickle, as well as a spell working as a food champion at Jamie Oliver's Recipease. As my visit would show, the restaurant's dynamic duo has formed quite the creative partnership.

### THE DÉCOR

There is so much to like about this place. Although I would normally choose to have Indian food for dinner, the casual nature of the restaurant, and its presentation as a cafe, makes it an equally attractive place to drop into for lunch.

Painted in warm sabar orange and lime green, with exposed brick walls and solid oak wood flooring, it's easy to forget that you're in an Indian restaurant in Brighton. It really has the feel of a trendy East London eatery; relaxed, fun and forward-thinking.

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*Three course dinner for two with a bottle of craft beer each - £60.*

*Intrigued by the idea of Indian wine? Turn to page 100, where Douglas Blyde meets the man from Mandala.*

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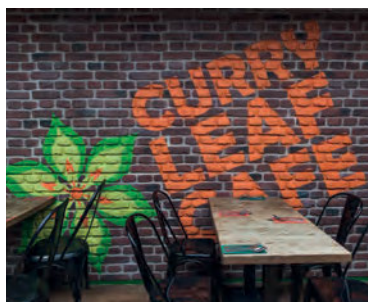


## THE MENU

South Indian food is often fresher and lighter than its Northern counterpart, making it far easier to consume a lot of. Sauces are not blended, so you detect all the ingredients and the food is fragrant. Kanthi has a lightness of touch with the food and from the samples of the menu I tried, you can clearly tell this is the sort of cuisine he has grown up with and loves; adding his own tweaks and twists to elevate home-style dishes. Starters of pan-fried mackerel spiced with chilli, ginger, garlic, and curry leaves and adraki chaamp (lamb chops marinated in a ginger-based spice paste) were a great introduction to the flavoursome and exciting realm of Indian street food. And they were an instant example of how Curry Leaf Cafe differs to traditional Indian restaurants.

On to the main course. Goan pork vindaloo, a dish peppered with Portuguese influence, achieves the perfect balance of heat, sourness and sweetness, a real stand-out dish that you won't find so well-done by too many places. Mild yet flavoursome paneer kofta zafrani also offered a wonderful combination of tastes, consisting of fried Indian cheese and vegetable dumplings simmered in a creamy tomato and onion sauce. Dishes were served with plentiful rice and naan to soak up those gravies.

Personally, I have always found desserts at Indian restaurants disappointing, often lacking imagination. Not so at Curry Leaf Cafe. Banana and semolina dumplings served with beetroot and cardamom ice cream provided the perfect mix of savoury and sweet, combining real unique flavours in a showstopping end to the meal.



## THE DRINKS

As a Brit, Euan knows how challenging it can be over here to match Indian food with drinks. How many of us in the UK have struggled to find anything that can equal the panoply of Indian spices, other than a heat-cooling lassi or a thirst-quenching beer? Fortunately, as the Curry Leaf Cafe's meteoric rise attests, Euan is not a man to shy away from a challenge. The drinks menu is impressive, offering a number of hand-picked ales to accompany anything you may choose on the menu, as well as a thorough and carefully chosen selection of European and even Indian wines from Mandala.



## THE SERVICE

All the staff members we encountered are friendly, helpful and always on hand to walk you through the menu and give advice on beer and wine pairings for your courses - as the sheer choice can actually hinder you making a selection. Far more relaxed than a traditional Indian restaurant, the service is befitting of the laid back 'cafe culture' that Curry Leaf exudes.

## THE VERDICT

Much more than a place to eat, Curry Leaf Cafe aims to build a new community of people interested in Indian culture, sustainable dining and the sociable pleasures of the street food experience. It's perfect for lunch or dinner, and I also hear that they serve a pretty mean brunch. Curry Leaf Cafe is a great example of how to reinvent a cuisine without losing any of the substance and flavour that made it special in the first place.



This issue's Guest Editor **Wyn Ma** talks to Zoe Perrett about an encounter that sparked a long-term love affair with British food and his respect for fellow chef Dan Doherty

# food chain





In the last issue, our first Guest Editor Cyrus Todiwala nominated Green Papaya's **Wyn Ma** as his successor, extensively praising the chef's skills and talent as he delivered a hearty and enthusiastic discourse on the cuisine of Vietnam.

This time round, it's Wyn's turn to pay it forward; talking about his own experiences with the food of his adopted country and one individual who he believes is doing some very good things indeed in the 'Modern British' arena...



## Wyn on Dan Doherty of Duck & Waffle:

"The very first time I was introduced to traditional British food was many years ago now, through a close friend. We went to a pub well-known for serving up great British dishes; on this occasion, the dish in question was the good old Sunday roast. My usual diet meant that this was something I was not accustomed to, but I was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed the dish - the way the roast beef tasted, the taste and texture of the potatoes and vegetables, the Yorkshire pudding, and that silky gravy.

The meal was awesome, and became an instant favourite of mine. That first experience opened the doors for



me and introduced me to a whole new cuisine. After that encounter, my list of favourites was rapidly extended to include beef Wellington, bangers and mash, and, of course, the traditional fish and chips - not forgetting the mushy peas!

By approaching new cuisines with an open mind, I have come to learn that although food from around the world involves different cooking methods and main ingredients, all share one common aim: namely, to create a dish that will satisfy a person's tastebuds, delivering a memorable experience for all the senses.

For a chef, cooking is approached in much in the same way as an artist who is painting a picture; losing themselves in the creative process of making something which people will admire and enjoy. In my eyes, the chef is indeed an artist - painstakingly choosing just the right ingredients and preparing them with care, merging them together with passion, affording them time and respect, and ultimately yielding a dish that is as near to perfect as it can be.

A young and very talented chef I admire at the moment with regard to British cooking is Dan Doherty. He conjures up amazing dishes and is a wizard of his art. His menus at Duck & Waffle give me a deeper appreciation of classic and modern British food alike, and I can't praise him highly enough.

I have just one word to describe this chef and his food: wonderful."

Wyn

## Vivacious Vietnamese

Where to try Wyn's own signature specialities  
Green Papaya

Hackney may have become known as the hackneyed preserve of the hip, but the East London neighbourhood offers some splendid Vietnamese eating options. Chief amongst them is Green Papaya, where Wyn habitually and seemingly effortlessly turns out brilliantly-balanced dishes bursting with every element one would hope for from the food. Whether fiery and fierce; herbal and fragrant; or all those things at once, flavours are fresh, clean, and clear.

Green Papaya 191 Mare Street, London E8 3QT and 97 Kingsland Road, London E2 8AG  
green-papaya.com



# Duck & Waffle

## Where Dan's food takes British food to dizzy heights

Claiming your venue offers unrivalled elevation of Modern British food seems somewhat lofty. But, since Duck & Waffle's diners gaze down on the City of London from the 40<sup>th</sup> Floor of Heron Tower, that statement is quite literally fact. And, in fact, most would agree that it's true in terms of the food, too.

24/7 opening means that executive chef Dan's rather fine food can be enjoyed at any time of day - and indeed, right through the night. The chef's genial demeanour translates to the menu and the atmosphere. The cuisine and restaurant might be pretty darn cool, but the welcome is warm.

Shrewsbury-born Dan likes sustainable, seasonal, local ingredients. So far, so traditional. But he also likes to remix and re-imagine them in manners you'd never expect and will surely enjoy. Like, perhaps, the now-legendary spicy ox cheek donut; a smoked roe, spiced carrot and raisin combo he calls 'Coronation cod'; 'East End eels', whose name is a cheeky nod to a traditional cockney speciality; or his fillet of Angus beef carpaccio with foie gras, truffle and pecorino (see recipe).

Incidentally, Dan's last meal on earth would be the very same one that gave Wyn's his first taste of British food - a Sunday roast. At Duck &

Waffle, his signature roast beef dinner comprises Longhorn ribeye from Thirsk, roast Grelot onions, and heritage radishes, served with a Marmite Hollandaise that you'll probably love rather than hate.

That might well be the chef's ideal meal, but one could argue that every dish at Duck & Waffle could be a desert island dish. Dan would counter that with the sweet sentiment that he just cooks to see people smile.

Duck & Waffle 40th Floor Heron Tower, 110 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AY  
duckandwaffle.com



## WYN MA'S BÒ LÚC LẮC - SHAKING BEEF

Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

For the vinaigrette:

- » ½ tbsp rice vinegar
- » ½ tbsp sugar
- » 1 tbsp soy sauce

For the beef:

- » 4 cloves garlic, minced
- » 1 tbsp fish sauce
- » 1 tbsp sugar
- » 1 tbsp soy sauce
- » 1 tsp oyster sauce
- » 1 tsp ground black pepper
- » 1 tsp sesame oil
- » 1 tbsp olive oil
- » 400g lean sirloin steak, cubed
- » 1 medium bag watercress
- » 2 tsp vegetable oil
- » 1 onion, sliced
- » 1 medium hot chilli, chopped (optional)

### METHOD

For the vinaigrette, mix together all the ingredients and reserve until required.

For the beef, mix the garlic, fish sauce, sugar, soy sauce, oyster sauce, black pepper, sesame oil, and the olive oil in a bowl.

Add the cubed beef to the bowl, mix well, and allow it to marinate for at least 30 minutes.

Arrange watercress on a serving plate.

Heat the vegetable oil in a pan until smoking hot and stir-fry the marinated beef, onion and chilli for 1-2 minutes depending on your preference - but do be careful not to overcook the beef.

Spread the beef over the watercress, pour the vinaigrette over the top, and serve immediately.





## DAN DOHERTY'S BEEF CARPACCIO WITH FOIE GRAS

*This dish goes way back, to when Tom Cenci (our senior sous chef) and I worked at Noble Rot, the sister restaurant to 1 Lombard Street, where we both trained. Julian, the chef, was one of the most influential people I have worked for – he's a loss to Britain, but a great gain for Canada, where he now cooks. We serve this a little differently at the restaurant to how we did back then, but it's always a winner.*

**Serves: 6 | Preparation time: 1 day | Cooking time: 30 minutes**

### INGREDIENTS

- » 300ml port
- » 50g caster sugar
- » 1 clove
- » 1 star anise
- » 300g foie gras
- » sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- » a splash of Cognac
- » 600g piece of centre cut beef fillet, trimmed
- » 50g pecorino cheese

### METHOD

To make the port reduction, put the port, sugar and spices into a small saucepan and heat until the mixture has the consistency of runny honey. Strain and set aside to cool.

Next, we need to make the cured foie gras. Allow the foie gras to come to room temperature. Using a small spoon, start to explore inside and whenever you come across a vein, remove it. Shape it back together, place it on a plate and season with salt, pepper and a splash of Cognac. Put into the fridge and allow to firm up for a couple of hours.

Preheat your oven to 120°C/gas mark ½.

Put the foie gras into an ovenproof dish and place in the oven for approximately 10 minutes, or until it just starts to melt. Remove it from the oven and lift it out of the melted fat, then place it on a piece of clingfilm and roll it into a sausage about 2.5cm thick, and as long as your beef fillet. Tie each end and place in the freezer for a few hours until frozen. If you have more than one roll that's fine, you can freeze them for another time, or refrigerate and eat on toast.

Take your beef fillet and, using a wooden spoon or something similar, insert it down the centre to make a

hole all the way in so it comes out the other side. Give it a little wiggle to make the hole wider, as this is where we will insert the roll of foie gras.

Remove the clingfilm from the foie gras, then insert the roll into the hole in the beef. Wrap the whole thing in clingfilm again.

If you don't have a slicing machine, refrigerate the beef until firm, then carefully slice as thinly as possible. If you do have access to a slicing machine, freeze the beef overnight. When ready to serve, remove the beef from the freezer and allow to stand for 20 minutes (this will make it easier to slice). Slice the beef 2.5mm thick.

Arrange the beef on a serving platter, about 8 slices per person, with the slices of foie gras on top. Drizzle over the port reduction and grate over the pecorino, as finely as possible.

Season with salt and pepper and enjoy.

*Recipe extracted from 'Duck & Waffle: Recipes and Stories' by Dan Doherty, published by Mitchell Beazley*





## WANDERLUST AND A WORK ETHIC: MEET THE FOODISH BOY

Alex Nazaruk tells Zoe Perrett how 52 weeks, 52 jobs, and a round-the-world ticket changed his life



27-year-old Alex Nazaruk from Leeds always harboured a deep desire to travel. The soundtrack to the majority of the Northern lad's childhood was tales from his parents' decade overseas. In Alex's own words, his Ukrainian cossack dancer father 'recalled anecdotes of masculine bravado dancing in Monte Carlo, whilst Mum told romantically-inclined tales of a hard-up artist struggling to make ends meet.'

With that background, it seemed inevitable that Alex would one day follow in their far-flung footsteps.

As he grew up, Alex's appetite for adventure was joined by just a plain old-fashioned appetite. Food became a major interest, and those passions spawned a plan. Alex would literally 'work' his way around the world in rather more than 80 days, accruing the broadest culinary education he could in the process.

And so the stage was set – 52 weeks, 52 jobs, five continents...and one aspiring chef. Was there a key character that figured in the triggering of the plot? Alex says not so; 'I took inspiration from so many different sources it would be hard to name one - parents; friends; University lecturers; writer; chefs; even strangers on the tube. By the time I made the ultimate decision, it felt like my life had been leading up to that moment, rather than it being a huge step into the unknown.'

A trip of such proportions is not easy to execute. Initially, Alex embarked on a journey that was merely virtual, through the medium of food and travel literature. His ideas were sketchy and his experience scant. In a thoroughly modern manner, his planning played out over a series of pleading tweets, emails and calls to chefs, restaurants, writers, and potential facilitators.

### A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY STARTS WITH A SINGLE TWEET

He must have been blessed with the gift of the gab, because this approach achieved serious results. The '52-job thing' obviously struck a chord, because accordingly, Alex was soon drowning in helpful advice from all corners of the globe - and had even secured 13 solid work placements. That number might be unlucky for some, but in this instance, it provided a sure start.

What would follow that period though, was the certain prospect of uncertainty. Alex brushed it off with bravado; 'When my friends asked, I laughed their questions off, saying that the great unknown was where the real adventure began, though deep inside I was scared to death of failure.'





## COLOURFUL CHARACTERS

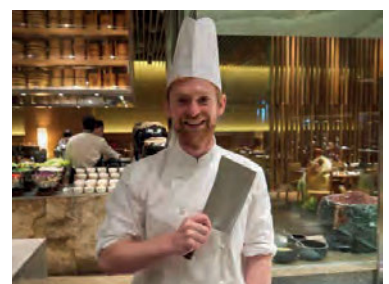
**Enrique** the 61 year-old jimador, who had been working and drinking in the agave fields of Mexico for 50 years

**Buffalo**, the oddjob man at a Cambodian restaurant who proudly bore tattoos that he had inked himself using battery acid and breast milk (I kid you not)



Once he'd launched, failure simply did not befall him. Instead, encounters with inspiring individuals helped sculpt not only his skills and character, but also his onward journey. In Iceland, Alex underwent a baptism of fire, composing a New-Nordic tasting menu with just one colleague - without the head chef in the house. Such precise work does not need nerves, but Alex recalls; 'I could barely keep my hands steady, not ideal when I had to delicately pipe dill mayo onto a sliver of dried scallop and top it with a chervil flower.'

It was not easy for Alex to adapt to his new nomadic lifestyle; less so still when each week demanded not only a relocation but also a recalibration in order to undertake his next role. Tokyo in particular proved a huge culture shock - Alex speaks of taking 'an afternoon trip for coffee and ending up stumbling out the Shinjuku Golden Gai at sunrise with a Japanese gynaecologist, in search of the perfect ramen.'





## HIGHLIGHTS

- Partying with South America's finest chefs, including Virgilio Martinez and the Troisgros dynasty
- Mastering the art of fermentation in Japanese
- Learning about nixtimisation in Mexico
- Sipping on luscious Malbecs in the fields of Mendoza whilst exploring viniculture
- Coffee harvesting deep in the Brazilian jungle
- Making cheese on the pastures of Sicily

## LOWLIGHTS

- Working in hotel kitchens, but you'd probably have to work in one to understand! Ask any chef, they'll probably agree
- Having to slaughter over 200 live frogs in a kitchen in China wasn't an experience I would ever really want to re-live



## KINDNESS OF STRANGERS?

It was those encounters with strangers – some evidently stranger than others – that constantly astounded Alex. Without unnecessary melodrama, he attributes much of the trip's success to sheer human generosity and random acts of kindness.

But towards the end of his travels, Alex found the time he spent as a stagiaire at Relae in Copenhagen both soul-sapping and physically exhausting. Menial work and military-style discipline saw him at the brink of a breakdown, but in hindsight, he accepts the experience was an essential part of his journey. 'I set out to work in a variety of kitchens, from those that mollycoddle young chefs like family, to places like Relae, where hard work and tough love help guarantee success in the kitchen. I certainly left Relae as a better and more confident chef than when I arrived. More so than any restaurant experience to date.'

Would he put himself through it all again? Alex assesses the question thoughtfully. 'It was hard work, exhausting and not always plain sailing; but yes. Without doubt it was the best decision I've ever made. It's amazing how much you can learn from life when you feed your mind and open your heart to new people and experiences. With a similar amount of cash, I could have put myself through culinary school. But instead I was lucky enough to learn a rich diversity of skills from other cuisines and cultures in a practical manner. It was an education like no other.'



**'It's amazing how much you can learn from life when you feed your mind and open your heart to new people and experiences'**



## STILL FOODISH?

Prior to his adventure, Alex considered himself as 'a cultured caveman ready to embark on an exploration of appetite. To me food was an artefact of nature and of tastes, textures, aromas and aesthetics. It was hunger that was calling me forth.'

His perceptions of food evolved as he roved far and wide, and Alex grew to appreciate its role in 'religious identity and political power; traditions and rituals.' Inevitably, a book is in the pipeline, as is a more permanent pursuit.

Will that be food-related? Undoubtedly. Alex is undecided on specifics, but crystal-clear on one thing: 'So as long as I'm in a kitchen with a great set of people, I will keep on cooking.'



## ULTIMATE TASTE SENSATION

A dish based on chuño, a frost-resistant potato grown at high altitudes that's repeatedly frozen at night and thawed in the daytime sun. At Central restaurant, Lima, Peru, chuño mash is topped with cushuro, a round cyanobacteria that grows on lakes at altitudes of 3,600ft; and finished with native ingredients called mullaca root and taperiba.

For more of Alex's travel tales: [foodishboy.com](http://foodishboy.com)

## CEVICHE CALIENTE – HOT SEABASS CEVICHE

*Foodish Boy says, 'During my time in Peru I encountered the ceviche in many guises, but it was Virgilio Martinez's version at his Lima venue, Central Restaurante, which really stood out. A hot take on the classic recipe, this seabass dish offers perfect comfort on a cold evening.'*

Serves 2 as a starter

### INGREDIENTS

For the leche de tigre (tiger's milk):

- » 2 tbsp salt
- » 1 tsp sugar
- » 100g celery, roughly chopped
- » 100g onion, roughly chopped
- » 5g crushed garlic
- » 5g fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- » 200ml water or light fish stock
- » 100g coriander

For the ceviche:

- » leche de tigre (as above)
- » 30g seabass trimmings
- » 10 tbsp fresh lime juice
- » 2g aji limo or red jalapeño
- » 100g rocoto chilli paste (but online from [vivaperu.co.uk](http://vivaperu.co.uk))
- » 1 tsp salt (or to taste)
- » 150g sea bass fillet, cut into 2cm cubes
- » cress, to garnish

### METHOD

For the leche de tigre, put all the ingredients except the coriander in a blender and process briefly. Tip into a container and add the coriander. Allow to infuse for 1 hour, then remove and discard the coriander.

For the ceviche, put the tiger's milk, seabass trimmings, lime juice, aji limo or red jalapeños, and rocoto chilli paste in a blender. Mix for 1 minute, pass the mixture

through a sieve, and adjust the seasoning to taste.

Set a nonstick pan over high heat and quickly sear the cubed seabass just to colour the surface.

Pour the tiger's milk mixture into a saucepan, bring to the boil, and simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the seabass, plate up, and serve immediately, garnished with cress.

*Recipe courtesy of Virgilio Martinez at Central Restaurante in Peru  
[centralrestaurante.com.pe](http://centralrestaurante.com.pe)*





## PICKLED RED ONIONS

Foodish Boy says, 'During my time in Sao Paulo I was lucky to spend time with the exceptionally talented Alberto Landgraf, who, after several years working with Gordon Ramsay and Tom Aitkens, brought to Brazil an ingredient-focused fine dining restaurant called Epice. This can be served as a beautiful amuse bouche that will wow dinner guests.'

Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 red onions
- For the pickling liquor:
- » 50g water
- » 25g olive oil
- » 25g Jerez vinegar
- » 7g sugar
- » 3.5g salt
- For the chive oil:
- » 1 bunch of chives
- » 100ml rapeseed or other light oil
- To finish:
- » 30g pinenuts
- » 120g sherry vinegar
- » 35g sugar
- » pinch of salt
- » 35ml olive oil

### METHOD

Halve the onions and extract only the best-looking middle layers. For the pickling liquor, bring all the ingredients to the, then turn off the heat and add the onion hearts. Leave them in the liquor at room temperature for 6 hours.

For the chive oil, pureé the chives with the oil in the blender for until smooth. Leave to stand for 6 hours, then pass through a muslin cloth or clean tea towel and reserve until required.

Toast the pinenuts in a dry pan set over low heat, stirring to prevent burning. Meanwhile, heat the vinegar and the sugar in a saucepan set over medium heat until their volume is reduced by half. Add the toasted pinenuts to this reduction with the salt and olive oil.

To serve, spoon some of the reserved chive oil in the middle of a plate and add the pickled onions. Top with the pinenuts.

*Recipe courtesy of Alberto Landgraf at Epice in Sao Paulo [epicerestaurante.com.br](http://epicerestaurante.com.br)*

#### TIP

You can also add a small spoon of sour buttermilk and some chopped chives if desired



## CHURAN KA KARELA, PUFFED QUINOA, BITTER CRISP

### INGREDIENTS Serves 2

- » 200g karela (spiny Indian gourd)
- » salt
- » vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- » 1 tbsp oil
- » 2 whole green cardamom pods
- » 1-inch piece cinnamon stick
- » 1 small piece mace
- » 200g onion, sliced
- » 10g sugar
- » 5g chopped ginger
- » 30g anardana (dried pomegranate powder)
- » 3g red chilli powder
- » 2g garam masala
- » 2ml lemon juice
- » 5g fresh coriander, finely chopped

To garnish:

- » karela chips (available at Asian food shops)
- » puffed quinoa (available at health food stores)

### METHOD

Wash, peel and slice the karela. Rub the salt into the exposed flesh and leave for 5 minutes (this helps to remove the bitterness). Rinse under cold running water and pat dry with kitchen paper.

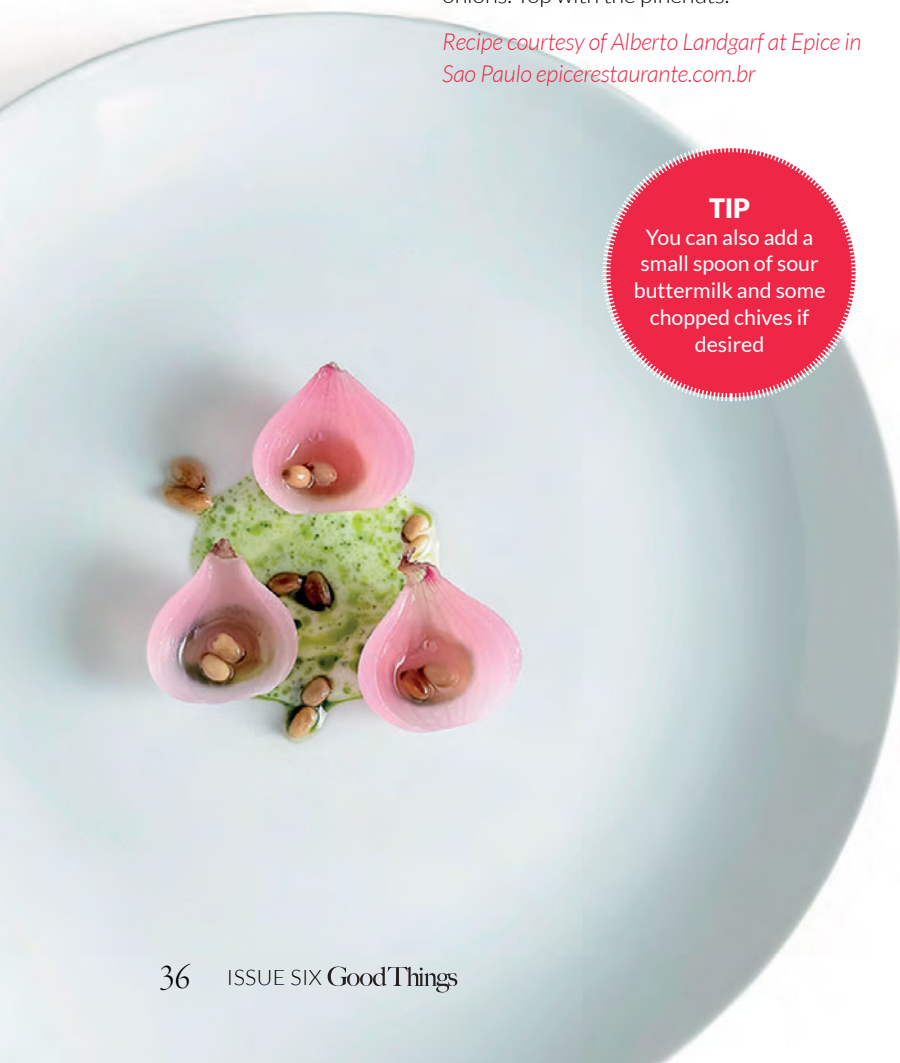
Heat oil for deep-frying to 180C and fry the karela pieces until golden-brown, then remove with a slotted spoon, and drain on kitchen paper.

Heat the tablespoon of oil in a heavy-bottomed pan set over medium-high heat, drop in the whole spices, and cook until they crackle. Add the onion, and cook, stirring, until caramelised.

Add the sugar and cook for a further minute, then add the ginger, followed by the fried karela, dried pomegranate, chilli powder and garam masala.

Finish with lemon juice and chopped coriander, and serve garnished with the karela chips and quinoa puffs.

*Recipe courtesy of Manish Mehrotra at Indian Accent restaurant in New Delhi [indianaccent.com](http://indianaccent.com)*





## DUCK CHETTINAD AND TOMATO RASSA

Foodish Boy says, 'As a curry-loving Brit, I was thrilled to spend time in Delhi, discovering some hidden gems you can't find back home. You won't find the food that Indian Accent's chef Manish Mehrotra makes on the menu at your local curry house. Manish plates the following recipes with rava idli (spongy steamed semolina dumplings) and garnishes the dish with filo pastry 'wings'. For a simple 'at home' take, simply serve with boiled rice.'

Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

For the duck Chettinad:

- » 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- » ½ tsp black mustard seeds
- » 1 tsp urad dal
- » 4-5 fresh curry leaves, washed
- » 1 tbsp shredded coconut
- » 50g bhuna paste
- » 1 tsp crushed black pepper
- » 1 tsp tamarind pulp
- » 50ml coconut milk
- » 100g cooked, shredded duck
- » 1 tsp chopped fresh coriander

For the tomato rassa:

- » 1 tbsp ghee
- » pinch of asafoetida
- » ½ tsp mustard seeds
- » 1 tsp urad dal
- » 4-5 curry leaves, washed
- » 10g ginger pureé
- » ½ tsp green chilli pureé
- » ½ tsp ground turmeric
- » ½ tsp red chilli powder
- » 100g blanched tomatoes, pureéd
- » 50ml boiled potatoes, pureéd
- » 50ml water
- » salt, to taste
- » 1 tsp chopped fresh coriander



### METHOD

For the duck Chettinad, heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium-high heat, then add the mustard seeds, urad dal, and curry leaves, and cook briefly until they crackle.

Add the coconut and sauté for a minute, then add the bhuna paste and sauté.

Add the black pepper, tamarind pulp, and coconut milk, and mix well.

Add the shredded duck, mix thoroughly, heat through, and finish with chopped coriander. Keep warm until ready to plate.

For the tomato rassa, heat the ghee in a heavy-bottomed pan set over medium-high heat, and add the asafoetida.

Add the mustard seeds, urad dal and curry leaves. Cook briefly, until they crackle, then add the ginger and green chilli pureés and sauté briefly.

Add the turmeric and red chilli powder, followed by the tomato pureé. Cook until the tomato leaves the side of pan

Add the potato pureé and sauté for a few minutes, then add the water and bring to the boil. Simmer for 2 minutes and adjust the seasoning.

Remove from heat, and finish with chopped coriander.

Serve the duck Chettinad and tomato rassa together, with boiled rice or a staple of your choice.

*Recipe courtesy of Manish Mehrotra at Indian Accent in New Delhi [indianaccent.com](http://indianaccent.com)*

## DEEP-FRIED CRICKETS

Foodish Boy says, 'During my travels, I encountered many examples of insect cuisine. This simple recipe from my time working with pioneering chef Matt Stone in Melbourne was by far the tastiest. Crickets can be bought online, but if you're feeling really brave, contact your nearest pet store to see if they have any in stock.'

Serves 4 as a snack

### INGREDIENTS

- » oil, for deep-frying
- » 100g crickets
- » salt, to taste
- » 2 tsp dried ground lemon myrtle (buy online from [steenbergs.co.uk](http://steenbergs.co.uk))
- » Sriracha hot sauce, to serve

### METHOD

Heat the oil to 180C, and deep-fry the crickets for 4 minutes or until golden-brown in colour.

Drain on kitchen paper, then place in a bowl, add salt to taste, and dust with the lemon myrtle.

Serve hot, with a pot of Sriracha for dipping.

*Recipe adapted from Matt Stone at Brothl by Joost in Melbourne [byjoost.com/brothl](http://byjoost.com/brothl)*





This Christmas, *Joel Porter* will pass on the port and stilton and explore some clever cheese and beer combinations instead. And he implores you to do the same...

# Cheese *bored?*

**W**ith all the ritual of Christmas, it's easy to get stuck in a culinary rut, following the same routine year in year out. While many would be loathe to eschew their favourite traditions; whether it's a plump golden turkey or a brandy-fuelled Christmas pudding; a festive cheeseboard is one area where everyone can afford to be a little more adventurous this year.

Once upon a time, I worked as a cheesemonger at The Cheese Board, an independent store in Greenwich, London. Despite having a counter bursting full of unusual, artisan cheeses, the three most popular at Christmas would inevitably be stilton, brie and cheddar – all fantastic, of course, but the cheese-buying equivalent of Frank Sinatra's *Christmas Collection*.

Over the last few years, an explosion of interest in craft beers has also led to an increasing interest in matching it with food, with cheese and beer making particularly good bedfellows. The oaty, bitter notes of a good stout pairs beautifully with the rich saltiness of a strong blue, while the earthy tang of a fresh goat's cheese cries out for something sweeter such as Belgian raspberry beer. As ever, there are no hard and fast rules – experiment with your favourites and see what works for you.

Although supermarket cheese selections have greatly improved in recent times, it's at independent stores – of which there are now many – where one can find the really interesting stuff. Speak with shop staff, try everything you can, and you'll have an incredible festive cheeseboard to take home in no time. To get you started, however, here are my top Christmas pairings...

© Getty



# The ultimate beer-paired cheeseboard

**On the slate:** *Young Buck* – Made in Northern Ireland to a stilton recipe by Mike's Fancy Cheese, with a strong, salty and lingering flavour.

**In the glass:** *Celt Ogham Ash Stout*

**On the slate:** *Quatirolo Lombardo* – A washed-rind cheese made in Lombardy; similar to Taleggio but firmer, with a richer, creamy flavour.

**In the glass:** *Partizan's 8 Grain Porter*

**On the slate:** *Grazalema* - Sheep's milk cheese from Andalusia rubbed with wheatgerm on the outside during maturation. A crumbly texture with flavor notes of caramel and almonds.

**In the glass:** *Brooklyn Brown Ale*

**On the slate:** *Remeker Pure* – A Gouda-like Dutch cheese made with rich Jersey milk, rubbed with ghee so rind is natural, not waxed. Intense, creamy; almost butterscotch flavour.

**In the glass:** *Thiriez Dalva IPA*

**On the slate:** *Cirone* - Made in the mountains near Bearn in Switzerland, it has a soft crumbly texture and a flavour that perfectly balances sweet, sour and salty.

**In the glass:** *Nogne Imperial Brown Ale*

## Sourcing

Beers available from

[beerhawk.co.uk](http://beerhawk.co.uk)

Cheeses available from

[cheese-board.co.uk](http://cheese-board.co.uk)



## CHILLI CHEESE TOAST

Cyrus Todiwala's recipe brings together beer and cheese with a good dose of spice – great for using up cheeseboard leftovers, and the perfect warming snack after a Boxing Day walk.

### INGREDIENTS

- » 50g salted butter
- » 50g plain flour
- » about 250ml beer or milk
- » 100g mature cheddar, grated
- » 100g Caerphilly or other mature cheese, grated
- » 25g blue cheese, crumbled, or more to taste
- » 3 free-range egg yolks
- » pinch salt
- » 2–3 mild fresh green chillies, seeds removed, finely chopped
- » 1 garlic clove, finely crushed (optional)
- » 1 tsp crushed black peppercorns
- » 1 heaped tbsp chopped fresh coriander
- » 2–3 tbsp English mustard
- » 6–8 thick slices bread
- » chutney, to serve

### METHOD

Melt the butter in a saucepan on a medium heat and mix in the flour with a wooden spatula, stirring continuously. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring all the while, to make a roux.

Remove from the heat. Gradually whisk in the beer or milk, and stir briskly for a few seconds until there are no unmixed bits of roux about, and return to a medium heat. Cook, stirring often, until the sauce starts to thicken, then simmer gently for 3–4 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat. Add the cheeses, egg yolks, salt, chopped chilli, garlic, pepper, chopped coriander and mustard, return to a low heat and cook gently until all the cheese has melted and the mixture starts to bubble at the edges – it will be very thick at this stage which is correct. Taste and adjust the seasoning if needed.

Heat the grill to maximum. Toast the bread, either under the grill on both sides or in a toaster. Dollop the rarebit mixture generously over the toast, place under the grill until bubbling and golden-brown in places. Serve hot with chutney.

Recipe extracted from *'The Incredible Spice Men'* by Cyrus Todiwala and Tony Singh, published by BBC Books





*Sauvignon Blanc*  
The Banter



*Shiraz*  
The Rumour



*Cabernet Sauvignon*  
The Dialogue



*Reserve*  
The Soliloquy

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## My Life On A Plate

# Nisha Katona

As a former barrister with no formal culinary training, Nisha Katona is in at the deep end with her first restaurant, 'Mowgli'. **Zoe Perrett** discovers if it is indeed proving to be a jungle out there

*Imagery* PETER GOODBODY



Indian cuisine is as steeped in history and tradition as it is spice. The richness of the culture from whence authentic fare comes seasons it with something intangible, yet inimitable. But that surrounding mystery also serves to deter those who lack a connection to the country from making their own forays into Indian cooking; seeing it as something that will always elude them.

Nisha Katona won't have any of that. Since achieving infamy with a series of heavily-nuanced, endlessly entertaining Youtube videos - co-starring her mother - openly splurging Indian kitchen secrets with gay abandon, she's been on a one-woman mission to demystify and democratise the cuisine, opening it up to all-comers with equal dollops of wit and wisdom. And now she's opened a restaurant.

Liverpool's Mowgli sits proudly on 'Bold St'; a road that's surely the most appropriate location for a venue whose proprietor could hardly be called shy and retiring. The aim is to go big on accessible authenticity, with very traditional food served up with a big warm welcome - and even the full recipe to those who desire it.

One thing's for certain - Indian food just got no-nonsense. Nisha, meanwhile, is still trying to make sense of a deliciously tumultuous and rather radical career change.

### You are a trained barrister – why do so many legal eagles turn to food?

The collective noun for barristers would definitely be 'a glutton'. A forensic mind means you analyse everything - for me, that was every dish that I ate, and every principle behind it. This love for good food and the alchemy of the kitchen awoke my food writing alter-ego.

### There are many misconceived myths about Indian food and cooking – which are you most keen to challenge?

The idea that every dish starts with garlic and onions, and the notion that everything comes cloaked in a thick homogenised sauce. I'd also like to stress the importance of good quality meat – spice is not a disguise.

### 10 'Indian kitchen' staples... go!

Turmeric, chilli, garam masala, cumin – whole and ground, mustard seed, nigella seed, panch phoron, ground coriander, and a pressure cooker. I know nine of them are spices, but with one pan and this little armoury of spices you can go anywhere in the 'currysphere'.



### You found fame with your quirky, informative Youtube food and recipe videos. Which has proved the most popular?

'How to make every shade of chicken curry' – but my personal favourite is the clip that captures a trip around a lively Indian grocer.

### You also host a 'Curry Clinic' on the radio. What are the most common – and strangest – queries you've encountered?

I once had an enquiry about tinned fruit cocktail curry which I took very seriously as it was prefixed with the words 'My Indian friend once cooked me...'. I was also asked about aphrodisiac spices, and was most unsettled when my mum rang me with a list!

### You and she are a noted Youtube double act. What are each of your culinary strengths and weaknesses?

My mother is punctilious, inflexible, and not one to approach other cuisines with an open embrace – so the Indian formulas she passes to me are unadulterated, pure and uncompromising: timeless and authentic.

I, by contrast, am a lazy cook. I am a vehement believer in making the spices work for me and not vice versa. The finesse is shaved off in my kitchen – but my brutal and rudimentary curry techniques are eminently accessible and attractive to those who need to administer good curry, quickly.



...and who is the better cook?

There is not a dish that my mother cooks that I can cook better. I hate this about myself.

In Britain, we're slowly shifting to recognise that there is no 'Indian' cuisine; rather, the country is composed of many dozens of distinct cuisines, plural. What's your own style?

As Bengalis, we love fish, mustard oil and paste, the five-seed spice blend 'panch phoron', asafoetida, and white poppy seeds. Before chilli came to India, many used long pepper to add heat, but Bengalis used mustard.

Which other Indian states are you happy to have on your plate?

Gujarat for its cleanly-elegant, slightly-sweet, lightly-spiced vegetarian dishes; and Punjab for shamelessly pungent, heavy and rich dishes that make great use of ginger, garlic and onion - and are a pure culinary fiesta when one is ravenous.

What's on the menu at Mowgli?

I chose the dishes that I am addicted to - which ultimately meant twenty dishes with only eight meat dishes amongst them. The menu showcases stuff that goes on the hob once the guests have left: humble, undressed, light fare that is eaten in homes and on streets all over India.

For too long Indians have felt that westerners won't take to these items, so putting them centre-stage at Mowgli is a huge risk. A recalibration of expectations is required to relish lightly-spiced dishes like temple dal, tea-steeped chickpeas, and poppyseed potatoes, and lamb and bone marrow curry.



Which authentic dishes are you determined to convert 'curryhouse' fans to?

Pulses! Oft-seen in the West as the ignominious make-do food of avoidant hippies; but the very lifeblood of Indian cuisine, and the most eager-to-please of ingredients. With just a little teasing they create dishes that dance magic over every area of the tongue. A good dal is the flavour of an Indian mother's love.

Do you feel that offering equal amounts of vegan and meat-based dishes is a risky move? Why did you choose to make the menu thus?

I simply chose the best dishes I know, with no prior motive. It was a shocking moment when I tallied up. Commercial pressures dictate a meat-heavy menu. But it was almost as though the food of my ancestors subconsciously animated me to make it this way.

This is not a restaurant where the '(v)' is an apologetic second best. I love how the presumption in India is that dishes are vegetarian, with all else referred to as 'non-veg'. It overturns the balance that we have in the West.

What is your best-received dish at Mowgli?

That's like choosing a favourite child! Bunny chow is a firm favourite - the mutton-curry-in-a-hollow-loaf concept devised by Indian railway workers in South Africa. My head chef was raised on bunny chow, and there is something so endearing and charming about the dish - a beautifully tongue-in-cheek demonstration of Western restraint appropriating Eastern excess. It ticks all the boxes.

...and the best received when cooking to impress at home?

Lamb curry with bone marrow plums and anise. The best compliment any man every paid me was after eating this curry. He said it was what every man would want every curry to taste like.

When you come home, what's your ultimate spirit-soothing, soul-nourishing, life-saving dish?

The dal which features as 'temple dal' on the Mowgli menu (see recipes) as it comes from the pressure cooker of God himself.

More information

[nishakatona.com](http://nishakatona.com) | [mowglistreetfood.com](http://mowglistreetfood.com)



## CALCUTTA CABBAGE TANGLES

*The hardworking spring cabbage is packed full of deep, hidden flavours that are released and enhanced with this combination of ingredients. Having battled through the winter elements, these spring greens produce the most robust and full flavours making the final dish dramatic and tantalising.*

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 tbsp oil
- » 3 tsp mustard seeds
- » 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- » 2 spring cabbages, washed and finely sliced
- » 2 tsp turmeric
- » 1 tsp chilli powder
- » 2 tsp English Mustard paste (mixed with 125ml water)
- » 2 tsp sugar
- » salt, to taste

### METHOD

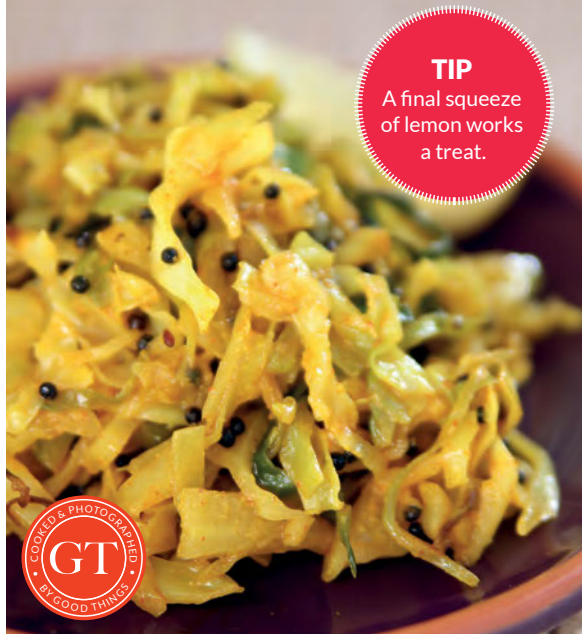
Heat the oil in a large frying pan set over a medium heat, and fry the mustard seeds until they crackle and pop.

Add the garlic, followed swiftly by the cabbage, turmeric, and chilli.

Reduce the heat to low and cook until the cabbage is soft.

Add the mustard paste, sugar and salt just before dishing up.

**TIP**  
A final squeeze of lemon works a treat.



## AUNTY GEETA'S PRAWN CURRY

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1tbsp oil
- » ½ tsp nigella seeds
- » 1 green chilli, chopped
- » ½ tin chopped tomatoes
- » ¼ tsp chilli powder
- » ½ tsp turmeric
- » salt, to taste
- » ½ tsp sugar
- » 1 heaped tsp English mustard
- » 200g peeled prawns
- » handful chopped coriander leaves

**TIP**  
This is great spooned into romaine lettuce leaves and wrapped up

### METHOD

Heat the oil in a frying pan set over medium heat. Add the nigella seeds and fry until they fizz, then add the green chilli and fry for a few seconds more.

Add the tinned tomatoes, the chilli powder, the turmeric, salt and sugar.

Simmer briskly until the tomatoes begin to turn a little brown, adding water to loosen it if you feel the mixture is drying out.

Add the mustard, stir, and add the prawns.

Cook for no more than 5 minutes until the prawns are just pink and tender.

Sprinkle in the coriander and serve with rice or chappatis.





## TEMPLE DAL

Every Indian has a bowl of dal at the ready in the fridge – the perfect quick warming comfort supper when you stumble in at night. It's full of protein, fat-free and quick to cook, and in this version, the freshness of the lemon and the green zing of the coriander lend a fragrant 'Jo Malone' elegance.

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 750ml water
- » 200g red lentils
- » ½ tin chopped tomatoes
- » 1 tsp turmeric
- » 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1 tsp cumin seeds
- » 1 green chilli, chopped (optional)
- » 1 heaped tsp sugar
- » salt, to taste
- » juice of ½ lemon - more if you like
- » ½ bunch coriander leaves, chopped

#### TIP

Also great cold, served with hot buttered toast! There is a video lesson of this recipe on [nishakatona.com](http://nishakatona.com)

### METHOD

In a big saucepan, combine the water, lentils, tomato, turmeric and bring to the boil, cooking until it resembles a medium-thick soup. Add more water if you want it looser, boil on if you want it thicker.

In a frying pan, heat the oil and add the cumin seeds. When they stop spluttering, add the green chilli (if using) and turn off the heat.

Pour the spiced oil into the boiled lentil mixture and add the sugar, salt and lemon juice.

Stir well and simmer for a further 5 minutes, adding the coriander in at the end.

Serve with rice, wraps, or just on its own with a spoon.

## HOUSE KERALITE CHICKEN CURRY

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 tbsp oil
- » ½ tsp mustard seeds
- » 10 fresh curry leaves, washed
- » 1 green chilli, chopped
- » 1 onion, chopped
- » ½ inch ginger root, grated
- » 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- » 2 chicken breasts, diced
- » 1 heaped tsp garam masala
- » ½ tin coconut milk
- » ½ cup natural yoghurt
- » salt, to taste
- » 1 tsp sugar
- » chopped coriander leaves

### METHOD

Heat the oil in a frying pan set over medium heat. Add the mustard seeds and fry until they pop – take care, as they splutter.

Add the curry leaves, chopped chilli, onion, ginger, and garlic, and sauté until soft and golden.

Add the chicken and garam masala and fry for 8 minutes until almost cooked.

Add the coconut milk, yoghurt, salt and sugar, and simmer on a low heat for a few minutes more.

When the chicken is cooked through, add the coriander, and serve with rice or in lettuce leaf wraps.



#### TIP

Fret not if the yoghurt curdles as this just adds texture and a nutty edge to the dish





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# OVERDONE!

The burger king is dead. The medium-rare patty is far too common, and we've had our fill of posh burgers. *Thomas Hobbs* examines the street eats that are contenders for its crown

*Imagery* **THOMAS HOBBS & GETTY**





The upmarket burger is still big business, and the current scene means that taking a trip to a food market can be a little on the beefy side, to say the least. But when burger boredom finally reaches its zenith, there are some intriguing global street eats waiting in the wings, poised to offer a dining experience that's altogether more diverting.

## KOTHU ROTI

Dhariny Sivajee of **Kothu Kothu** is introducing this long-term street corner fixture in Colombo to London. The dish is a colourful blend of chopped roti, vegetables, egg, meat or vegetable curry, spices and coconut; taking its name from the sound of the blades chopping it on the hotplate. Sri Lanka's cuisine is a close cousin to Indian food, and Dhariny hopes kothu roti can help bring the refreshingly spicy flavours of its street food to the mainstream in the UK. Watch this space.

[twitter.com/kothu\\_kothu](https://twitter.com/kothu_kothu)

## POUTINE

On paper, this Canadian mix of chips, gravy and cheese curd sounds like the aftermath of a student's first venture into the kitchen, but this tasty dish will warm you up this winter. Brick Lane's **The Pouterie** offers a more traditional take, whilst Chef de Poutine's approach abandons the curd altogether for Jamaican and Korean-inspired flavours. Poutine is definitive proof that there's depth to cheesy chips after all.

[twitter.com/ThePouterie](https://twitter.com/ThePouterie)

[twitter.com/chef\\_de\\_poutine](https://twitter.com/chef_de_poutine)



## KOTHU ROTI

*This tasty, versatile dish can be made up with any well-sauced curry leftover from the night before; be it chicken, mutton, fish or vegetable. Feel free to mix things up by adding other vegetables, too.*

**Serves 1 (This is a good guide – but adjust ingredient quantities to suit your own taste)**

### INGREDIENTS

- » vegetable oil
- » ½ tsp cumin seeds
- » 40g red onion, cut into thin slices
- » 50g spring greens, shredded into medium slices
- » 1 fresh red or green chilli, finely chopped
- » few fresh curry leaves, washed
- » salt, to taste
- » 130g roti, cut into thin strips
- » 100g mutton curry (see recipe right) or other 'wet' curry of your choice
- » 1 egg, scrambled
- » 1 tsp finely chopped fresh coconut

### METHOD

Heat a little oil in a pan over high heat and add the cumin, onions, spring greens, chilli, curry leaves, and a little salt. Fry for a few minutes until vegetables are cooked through, remove from the pan, and set aside.

Add the chopped roti and the mutton (or other) curry to the same pan, stirring well to mix and heat through thoroughly. Add the reserved vegetables and scrambled egg to the mixture, and mix everything together well.

Finish with a scattering of the coconut, and serve immediately.



## MUTTON CURRY

*Use some of this for kothu roti (see recipe) and enjoy the rest as a meal with rice.*

**Serves 2**

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- » ¼ tsp fenugreek seeds
- » ½ tsp fennel seeds
- » 1 small onion, finely diced
- » 1 green chilli, finely chopped
- » ½ tsp garlic, very finely chopped
- » ½ tsp ginger, very finely chopped
- » ½ tbsp curry powder
- » salt, to taste
- » 200g mutton, cut into small pieces
- » 1 small tomato, chopped

### METHOD

Heat the oil in a pan set over a medium heat, then add the fenugreek and fennel seeds and fry briefly, until fragrant. Add the onion and green chilli and cook, stirring frequently, until golden.

Add the garlic, ginger, curry powder, and salt, and cook for a minute, stirring frequently. Lower the heat slightly, then add the mutton and stir to mix well.

Cover the pan and leave to cook, stirring occasionally, for about 40 minutes. Add the chopped tomato and cook, uncovered, for a further 5 minutes or until the sauce has thickened slightly.

Check the seasoning, and serve hot – or use in kothu roti (see recipe, left).

*Recipes courtesy of Dhariny Sivajee from Kothu Kothu*



## SPICED CHICKEN LIVERS Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 500g chicken livers, halved and trimmed of fat
- » 50ml olive oil
- » 3 bay leaves
- » 2 birdseye chillies, finely chopped
- » 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- » pinch of salt
- » 2 tsp cracked black pepper
- » breadcrumbs
- » oil, for deep-frying
- » spicy cane vinegar, to serve (optional)

### METHOD

In a large bowl, mix together all the ingredients except the breadcrumbs, and leave to marinate in the refrigerator for a minimum of 2 hours - and, ideally, overnight.

When ready to cook, heat oil for deep-frying to 170C. Roll each piece of marinated liver in the breadcrumbs and deep-fry for 3 - 4 minutes.

Remove from the oil and drain the cooked liver pieces on kitchen towel.

Serve hot, with spicy cane vinegar.

*Recipe courtesy of Lee Johnson and Sinead Campbell from BBQ Dreamz*

## PULLED BBQ JACKFRUIT TACOS Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

For the BBQ sauce:

- » 4 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- » 2 jalapeño chillies, finely chopped
- » 1 tbsp chilli powder
- » 2 tsp ground cumin
- » ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- » 2 tsp ground coriander
- » 500ml tomato ketchup
- » 125ml lime juice
- » 1 cup dark brown sugar or molasses

For the pulled jackfruit:

- » 4 x 280g cans jackfruit in brine
- » 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- » BBQ sauce, as above

To serve:

- » soft corn tortillas
- » shredded cos lettuce
- » guacamole
- » sour cream (or dairy-free sour cream to make the dish vegan)
- » lime wedges
- » 1 tbsp chopped fresh coriander

### METHOD

For the BBQ sauce, heat half the oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat and fry the garlic and jalapeños for 1 minute. Add all the spices, stir, and cook for about 1 minute until fragrant.

Add the ketchup, lime, and sugar, and stir until all the sugar has melted. Partially cover and simmer on a low heat until the sauce has thickened to the consistency of ketchup. Reserve until required.

For the pulled jackfruit, drain and rinse the jackfruit. Tear, by hand, the strands of jackfruit from the cores. Use a knife to chop/slice the cores. It doesn't matter if these are still a bit chunky once chopped - this will add more texture to the dish.

Heat the remaining oil in pan and add the pulled jackfruit. Cook until the excess moisture evaporates and the jackfruit loses its colour. Stir in the mustard, and add a little water if it starts to stick to the pan.

Add about half the reserved BBQ sauce and stir to coat the jackfruit. The jackfruit should be coated in sauce, but not swimming in it - add more if you'd like the dish stickier and spicier. Fry until the mixture just starts to catch on the pan and get a little crispy.

To serve, warm the tortillas on a dry pan and spoon the pulled jackfruit on top. Add shredded cos lettuce, guacamole, sour cream, a squeeze of lime, and a sprinkle of coriander, and eat hot.

*Recipe courtesy of Meriel Armitage of Club Mexicana*

## PULLED JACKFRUIT

Where 'authentic American BBQ' is concerned, vegetarian alternatives are often an afterthought. If you're feeling pulled porked-out, check out some of Hackney-based **Club Mexicana's** pulled jackfruit. Deceptively meaty in its appearance and texture, the pulled, durian-like Southeast Asian fruit is the filling for a tangy tortilla. **Club Mexicana** also offers an equally-meaty beer-marinated seitan.

[clubmexicana.com](http://clubmexicana.com)

## SPICED CHICKEN LIVERS

Looking to bring liver to the masses is Hoxton's **BBQ Dreamz**, with its crumbed and deep-fried chicken livers. Served with a celery and spring onion salad, and sprinkled with spiced vinegar, the dish is a potent mix of offal and Filipino flavours. 'People don't just want a big slab of grilled meat anymore, and I can see there being a real shift towards exotic offal-based dishes over the next 12 months,' says co-owner Lee Johnson.

[twitter.com/BbqDreamz](https://twitter.com/BbqDreamz)

## AREPAS

Already causing a stir at London street food markets, arepas are generous cornbread patties filled with an assortment of black beans, avocado, grated cheese and chicken. Perfect with a dose of picante hot sauce, expect this Venezuelan street snack to continue its march across the country. Check out Manchester's **iArepas! iArepas!** or London's **Guasacaca** for the best interpretations.

[arepaarepaarepa.blogspot.co.uk](http://arepaarepaarepa.blogspot.co.uk)  
[guasacacalondon.com](http://guasacacalondon.com)







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Home to great cooking



## 52. Worth its salt Spice at Home

Kavita Favelle reviews top Indian chef Vivek Singh's latest cookbook, focused on relaxed recipes

## 55. Skills class Kimchi

Korean food has finally taken off in the UK. At Yijo, Kavita Favelle takes a class in kimchi-making

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This Japanese paste is incredible versatile. Kavita Favelle explores the ingredient's sheer scope

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Chris Keeling talks modern and ancient cooking techniques with Smoke & Salt, who share an innovative Christmas spread

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Deena Kakaya talks easy entertaining and teams up with Dhruv Baker to share impressive party recipes

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Winter is not all about Christmas. Zoe Perrett invites you to involve traditional festive feast dishes from all over the world

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Zoe Perrett checks out a show-stopping collection of chocolate logs – with a recipe to try at home

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Our new contributor talks about her earliest childhood food memories and shares a recipe for perfect pakoras

## 94. Vintage in good wood

Barrel-aged cocktails are big business. Douglas Blyde discovers just what the process adds to a tippie

## 100. Grape expectations

Douglas Blyde meets the man from Mandala, who says his Indian wines should put the country's viniculture on the map

## 108. Vodka in glorious HD

Andre Jackson shares the story behind a new niche vodka brand, and what to eat as you sip it

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# ENTERTAINING

Whatever your culture, the coming festive season will surely see some celebrations – and, with them, some serious chances to show off your culinary prowess. We haven't let you down: in this section, you'll learn how to cook Asian tapas and make kimchee; hone your charcuterie skills; become an expert on traditional global festive fare; and learn about the new trend for barrel-aging cocktails. Feast your eyes, too, on a dozen beautiful bûches de Noël – each one (almost) too good to eat.



# WORTH ITS SALT... SPICE AT HOME

KAVITA FAVELLE LEARNS HOW TO MARRY INDIAN SPICING WITH WESTERN INGREDIENTS AND TECHNIQUES TO CREATE DELICIOUS MODERN FUSION FOOD AT HOME

**V**ivek Singh is one of Britain's most celebrated Indian chefs. Classically trained in India, he's been executive chef at The Cinnamon Club since it opened. Since then, he's launched sister restaurants Cinnamon Kitchen and Cinnamon Soho. A frequent face on cookery shows including *Saturday Kitchen* and *MasterChef*, Vivek has also published several successful cookbooks revealing the secrets of his contemporary Indian restaurant dishes and exploring 'curry' from India, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

In *Spice At Home*, Vivek brings us something new, by focusing on the more relaxed style of cooking he enjoys at home. Weaving together ingredients, flavours, techniques and influences from East and West, Vivek has created a collection of dishes that marry together the best of Asia and Europe respectively.

Introducing the book, Vivek recalls his childhood in a Bengali colliery where his father worked as an engineer. His mother cooked three or four full meals a day on a coal fire, preparing everything from scratch. With no refrigerator, she bought fresh ingredients daily and the family were taught to finish everything on their plates. Vivek expresses awe for her ability to cope with unannounced mealtime visits from friends and family, admiring her 'flexibility, innovation and ingenuity'.

Today, living in London, cooking in the family home is a very different

prospect. Ingredients are easier to source and keep fresh, storing leftovers is not a problem and meal planning is immeasurably simpler, since it's less common for visitors to drop in unexpectedly. Another huge change is the availability of 'the whole world's ingredients, especially in the capital city; 'a melting pot of different cultures'. Vivek draws from these global influences for many of the book's recipes.

At the heart of the book are spices. 'India is the largest consumer and producer of spices in the world,' says Vivek, and the tradition of using spices for flavour, colour, taste, texture, preservation of ingredients and for medical and religious uses goes back thousands of years.

Vivek groups spices into three clusters - the basics, the aromatics and the rare - and gives advice on buying, storing and using them effectively. To start the lessons proper, he schools the reader in 'Spice Maths', a handy reference page providing six simple spice mixes for dishes such as korma, vindaloo and dhansak.

Then it's on to the recipes themselves, divided by when they are best enjoyed - for breakfast, lunch or dinner; or to entertain guests. Two more chapters share sides and sweets and at the end is a handy section on basics, covering more complex spice blends, core ready-prepared ingredients (such as ghee and crisp fried onions), basic techniques and a glossary.

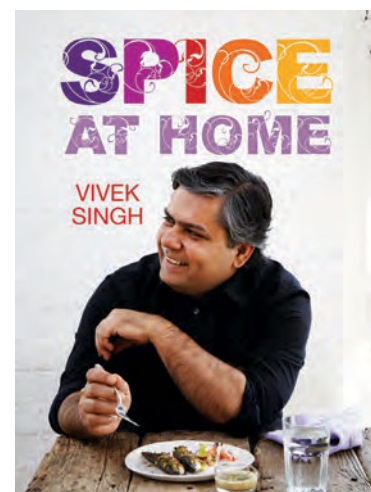
There are plenty of authentic Indian recipes in the book, from Poories and Stuffed parathas to Dal makhani and Paneer and peas curry. But the dishes which excite me the most are those in which Vivek playfully applies the influences of international ingredients and cuisines. To start the day, I might make Chorizo and cumin potatoes. For lunch, I lean towards Bangla Scotch eggs (see recipe), a Grilled chilli chicken toastie or Asparagus with curried yoghurt and 'gunpowder'. For dinner, I'm tempted by Pasta molly, Crab and curry leaf risotto and Lamb rogan josh pithivier. When friends come to dinner, I love the idea of serving Tandoori chicken pizza or Amritsar-spiced fish fingers; and who could resist ending with Apple and carom seed crumble or Lassi panna cotta (see recipe)?



© Laura Holmes

Fusion is often dismissed as a dirty word by chefs schooled in a world of rigid authenticity. But in *Spice At Home*, Vivek shares the reality of cooking in Britain today, guiding us with skill and temptation through a glorious fusion of Indian spices and modern British cooking.

*'Spice At Home' by Vivek Singh is published by Absolute Press*





## BANGLA SCOTCH EGGS

*The Bengalis like savoury cakes – they make them with potatoes and with fish, but call them ‘chops’. Here I have given the same treatment to a mixture of vegetables, where the colour of the beetroot gives these a distinctive look.*

Makes 8

### INGREDIENTS

- » 18 quail's eggs or 8 regular free-range eggs, soft boiled
- » 50g ghee or clarified butter
- » ½ teaspoon black onion seeds
- » ½ teaspoon fennel seeds
- » ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- » 3 bay leaves
- » 2 onions, finely chopped
- » 2 carrots, finely chopped
- » ¼ of a medium cauliflower, finely chopped
- » 100g French beans, finely chopped
- » 1 teaspoon red chilli powder
- » 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- » 1 beetroot, boiled, peeled and finely chopped
- » 10g raisins
- » 1 teaspoon salt
- » ½ teaspoon sugar
- » 2 potatoes, boiled, cooled and grated
- » corn or vegetable oil, for frying

For the spice mix:

- » 1 teaspoon roasted coriander seeds
- » 2 green cardamom pods

For crumbing:

- » 2 eggs, whisked
- » 150g dried breadcrumbs



### METHOD

If using quail's eggs, place the eggs in a pan with just salted water to cover the eggs and bring to the boil. As soon as the water comes to the boil, keep on the heat for just 45 seconds, then drain and chill the eggs in cold water. Allow to cool completely, then peel the eggs. Keep aside. If using regular eggs, lower the eggs into a pan of boiling salted water and cook for 6 minutes, then drain and chill in cold water.

To make the spice mix, pound the coriander and cardamom seeds coarsely using a pestle and mortar or in a food processor.

Heat the ghee in a deep, heavy-based wok. When hot, add the onion seeds, fennel seeds, cumin seeds and bay leaves. When they begin to crackle, add the onion and sauté for 6–8 minutes, until golden brown.

Now add all the vegetables, apart from the beetroot and the grated potato, as per the order of ingredients and sauté over a medium heat for a total of 4–6 minutes. Then add the red chilli powder, spice mix and the ground cumin and stir for an additional 5 minutes.

Add the raisins and diced beetroot and cook for another minute. Add the salt and sugar and stir well, then add in the grated potato and cook for 3–4 minutes until the mixture is evenly mixed, the colour turns reddish and the mixture becomes slightly shiny due to the ghee.

Cool the mixture, and when cold divide into 8 equal portions (or 18 portions if using quail's eggs). Roll them around the cooled boiled eggs. Dip the balls in the whisked egg, then roll in the dried breadcrumbs. Let the coated eggs cool in the refrigerator before frying.

Deep fry the eggs in batches at 170°C for 6–8 minutes until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper. Serve hot with any mustard-based sauce mixed with tomato ketchup.

## LASSI PANNA COTTA

*Anyone who has travelled to India in the summer will be familiar with the lassi stalls that pop up all over small towns and cities serving these cooling smoothie-style drinks. I love using the inspiration of lassi as the basis for a simple dessert which is great both for summer afternoons and for entertaining big numbers.*

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

- » 5 gelatine leaves (10g in total)
- » 500ml full-fat Greek yoghurt
- » 300ml whole milk
- » 125g caster sugar
- » ¼ teaspoon salt
- » 1 teaspoon green cardamom powder
- » 3–4 ripe mangoes, peeled, stoned and flesh chopped into 2.5cm dice
- » sprinkle of chaat masala (optional)

### METHOD

Soak the gelatine leaves in 100ml of cold water to soften them.

In a mixing bowl whisk the yoghurt, milk, sugar, salt and cardamom powder until it turns frothy.

Melt the gelatine in 100ml warm water, then add to the yoghurt mixture. Mix well and pour into individual moulds or serving bowls. Chill in the fridge for a couple of hours, or even overnight if you have the time.

Mix the diced mango (or seasonal fruits) with chaat masala (if using), and set aside for 15 minutes to make a fruit chat. Serve the panna cottas with a mango chat garnish or with any seasonal fruit salad.



## Skills class *Kimchi*

Kavita Favelle takes a crash course on Korea's obsession with kimchi

Imagery **KAVITA FAVELLE**



Having quickly built up a loyal customer base – who come for a range of authentic Korean treats as well as Yijo's headline menu item, Korean barbecue – Jun Pyo is now offering cooking classes, keen to teach eager students how to make Korean food themselves.

It was inevitable that first on the books was a class on making kimchi.

Fermentation has been used to preserve food in East Asia for millennia. Early kimchi was a simpler dish made by preserving cabbage in beef stock and fish sauce; it was only following the introduction to Korea of the red chilli in the 16th century that kimchi morphed into the fiery red dish it is today.

Made by fermenting vegetables in a spicy marinade, preserved kimchi has a distinctive sour note as well as chilli heat, crunchiness and umami savouriness. In Korea there

are hundreds of varieties, made from different vegetables and with variations in what Jun Pyo calls 'the porridge' - the blend of ingredients in which the vegetables are marinated before setting aside to age.

Some coastal regions add fresh oysters, salted shrimp and lots of salt to their kimchi. Elsewhere, less salt is used and seafood is not commonly included. White kimchi, without chilli, is a milder variation, prevalent in some parts of the country.

Some prefer their kimchi aged, the longer the better for a more pronounced sourness. Others enjoy it fresh, as soon as it's made.

### *'Without kimchi, I can't live!'*

declares Jun Pyo Kwon, as he guides us through the steps of making Korea's national dish.

Having previously been head chef at glitzy central London restaurant Kimchee, a year ago Jun Pyo bought Yijo in Central Finchley - a local neighbourhood restaurant where he could 'share more authentic food' with his customers. 'I wanted my own place, to do my own cooking,' he explains.







Historically, such differences were also seasonal. In spring, Koreans enjoyed fresh kimchi made from spring herbs and vegetables. In summer, crunchy summer vegetables such as cucumbers and radishes were used. Late autumn was the time to make preserved napa cabbage kimchi, to be aged and eaten during the long winter months.

Jun Pyo remembers his mother turning hundreds of cabbages into kimchi every November during his childhood. He tells us, 'all the mamas worked in teams, at a different mama's house each day' to make enough kimchi for each family - each member of his family of five would eat a whopping 100 cabbages-worth of kimchi through the winter.

He gleefully recalls his excitement as a young boy, 'waiting for kimchi time'. The traditional meal to complete 'kimjang day' - the day of kimchi making - was pork, rice, tofu and of course, fresh kimchi.

Even now, making kimchi regularly to serve to Yijo's customers, Jun Pyo can't help but feel cheered; 'When I've made kimchi I always feel better. I feel rich!'



The class is hands-on, so each of us makes our own Seoul-style kimchi with napa cabbage - the most common kind today. But Jun Pyo tells us that he also likes to use leeks, fern, Korean chives, cucumber, mooli... Indeed, there's no reason not to use other vegetables we like such as broccoli or even asparagus.

After halving our cabbages we learn how to salt them and, once they have soaked a while in the brine, gently open up the leaves ready to insert the marinade. Making the marinade involves creating a thick porridge of rice flour before mixing in a range of ingredients including garlic and ginger, fish sauce, fresh and preserved seafood, spring onions, chives and an enormous amount of Korean red chilli powder. Once the marinade is layered between all the leaves, we lovingly pat our cabbage halves into tight round balls and place them into containers to ferment.

Throughout the lesson, we are encouraged to adapt to our own tastes. 'We have a manual', says Jun Pyo, 'but we can forget the manual, we can break the rules!'

To make a fresh kimchi, we tear salted cabbage leaves into small pieces and mix them into more of the same marinade. This is ready to eat straight away. With our kimchi packed ready to take home, Jun Pyo invites us to sit and eat a traditional kimjang day meal of our own.

As we eat, I ask Jun Pyo about his favourite ways to enjoy kimchi. He nods fervently as he talks; 'freshly made, I love it on steamed rice. When it is old - as old as possible - I cook kimchi mandu' (dumplings).

Can he give us any more ideas on how best to use ours?

'Kimchi is my life', he says before launching enthusiastically into a list of dishes such as kimchi jiggae (a rich kimchi-laden stew), kimchi jeon (pancake) and kimchi bokkumbab (fried rice). Clearly, I still have lots to learn about Korean cuisine, and I know just the place to come.



For more information  
on forthcoming classes,  
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## KIMCHI BOKKEUMBAB

*Kimchi fried rice is a very easy Korean recipe, loved by everyone. It's a very versatile recipe: you can throw in any veg left in your fridge and also diced ham or meat. Top it with thin strips of omelette and some roasted seaweed and the perfect easy Korean dinner is ready in no time.*

*For this recipe, it is best to use an aged kimchi, as fresh kimchi won't give you the right balance of sour and sweet.*

Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

- » vegetable oil
- » 1 small onion, finely diced
- » a few mushrooms, finely diced
- » 200g any vegetables (e.g. carrot, peppers, green beans), finely diced
- » 250g kimchi, chopped
- » 3-4 tbsp juice from the kimchi
- » 150g ham (or any other meat), diced
- » 1 tbsp gochuchang (Korean chilli paste)
- » 360g cooked short grain rice (such as sushi rice)
- » 1 egg (or 2 if you want to top each serving with a fried egg)
- » 1 tbsp sesame oil
- » sesame seeds
- » 1 bunch spring onions, finely chopped
- » kim (Korean roasted seaweed)

### METHOD

Add a little oil to a wok set over high heat and briefly stir-fry the onions, mushrooms, and vegetables.

Add the kimchi and the kimchi juices to the pan and stir-fry for 2 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the ham or meat to the wok. Cook for another 3 minutes.

Spoon in the gochuchang (add more if you like it spicy), and mix well.

Add the cooked rice, stir to combine with the other ingredients, and cook for another 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in another pan, make an omelette - or simply fry the egg.

When the kimchi bokkeumbap is ready, stir in a tablespoon of sesame oil.

Tip into bowls and top with omelette strips or a fried egg, sprinkle with sesame seeds, finely chopped spring onions and roasted seaweed, and serve immediately.

*Recipe courtesy of chef Jun Pyo Kwon, image courtesy of Cindy Roberts at Yijo Restaurant*



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# A TASTE FOR MISO

## ON THE HUNT FOR UMAMI, KAVITA FAVELLE DISCOVERS HOW TO CONJURE UP THE MAGIC OF MISO

**A**re you familiar with umami? Discovered (and named) by Japanese scientist Kikunae Ikeda back in 1908 and known as the fifth taste group (alongside sweet, sour, bitter and salty), umami is most commonly translated as 'savoury' or 'meaty' and is a flavour profile that most of us enjoy in our food, whether or not we could name or identify it. Although it occurs naturally in many foods – including mushrooms, ripe tomatoes, chinese cabbage, asparagus, sweetcorn and shellfish – many cultures have become adept at creating umami-rich foods by cooking, curing and fermenting; these include cheese, green tea, fish sauce and yeast extract.

Miso is one such umami-bomb – an ingredient at the core of Japanese cuisine.

Made by fermenting soybeans, salt and additional grains such as rice or barley with a mould fungus known in Japanese as koji-kin, the result is a thick, salty and intensely savoury paste used as a seasoning throughout Japanese cooking.

There are many different varieties available in Japan, often broadly divided by their colour.

The most common misos are red and white, made with soybeans and rice. White has a higher percentage of rice than its red counterpart and is the mildest and sweetest. Red, aged

for longer, is stronger and saltier and darkens with age through red into brown. Some vintage misos are almost black in colour.

There are other types that are made with different grains such as barley, buckwheat, rye or millet.

Regional differences also play a part; in Sendai the locals prefer their miso slightly chunkier, so the soybeans are coarsely mashed rather than ground; in parts of Chubu and Kansai there's a preference for darker, saltier and more astringent miso. In Eastern Japan, the mild and sweet pale misos are enjoyed.

Fermentation of foods has been prevalent in East Asia since ancient times. Grains and fish were fermented in the Neolithic era and there are records describing the use of *Aspergillus* moulds in China as far back as 300. BC Fermented soybean products may have been introduced to Japan from China at the same time as Buddhism in the 6th Century CE.

Until the late 19th century, Japan's population ate mainly fish and vegetables. Since miso is high in protein and rich in vitamins and minerals, it became an important nutritional element of the Japanese diet, especially for Buddhists following a strictly vegetarian regimen.

In Japan, miso is obviously a key ingredient in miso soup (for which it is combined with dashi stock) but it also features in sauces, marinades, pickles and dressings (such as the tofu, sesame and miso dressing for green bean salad that we shared in our last issue). It is even used in sweet dishes; miso mochi – chewy dumplings made from rice flour – offer a delightful balance of sweet, salty and savoury.

Miso also lends itself to fusion cooking, offering a great way to add saltiness and savouriness to your dishes. Combine with honey, mustard and oil for a salad dressing; whip into butter and spread on fresh bread or melt over steamed vegetables; thin with water and brush onto meat before grilling or barbecuing; stir half a teaspoon into porridge instead of salt; or add to a bean casserole for extra flavour. Whenever you need a kick of umami, miso is the perfect ingredient.

### WHERE TO FIND MISO

Search the major supermarkets. Most now offer miso pastes in their speciality ingredients ranges (though these may not be available in every branch) but do check the ingredients – some products are ready made marinade or soup blends, with additional ingredients added to the miso. If you have an oriental supermarket within reach, you'll usually find a decent selection at lower prices.

Online stores also offer a wide choice. Try [japancentre.com](http://japancentre.com), [souschef.co.uk](http://souschef.co.uk), [wingyip.com](http://wingyip.com) and [clearspring.co.uk](http://clearspring.co.uk) (organic).





“

**MISO IS AN UMAMI-BOMB —  
AN INGREDIENT AT THE CORE  
OF JAPANESE CUISINE**

## JAPANESE- STYLE MISO COD

This simple marinade works beautifully with cod but can also be used with other fish such as salmon. It's also delicious on slices of aubergine or firm tofu.

Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 tbsp white miso paste
- » 2 tbsp mirin (Japanese sweet rice wine)
- » 2 tbsp sugar
- » 2 fillets of sustainable fresh cod, skin on

*Note: White miso has a slightly sweeter and milder flavour than the red version, which suits this recipe well. However, you can use red miso paste instead; use a touch less, in that case.*

### METHOD

Preheat your grill to a medium-hot setting.

Heat the mirin, white miso paste and sugar in a small saucepan, over a gentle heat, until the sugar has completely dissolved.

Place the fish fillets skin side down on a piece of foil.

Spread the paste generously over the surface of the fish, top side only.

Grill until the fish is cooked through and the paste is bubbling and starting to char. Depending on the thickness of your fillets, this will take 5-8 minutes.

Serve with rice and green vegetables.

*Recipe from KaveyEats.com ©  
Kavita Favelle*



# AT THE KNIFE'S EDGE

*Chris Keeling meets the chefs behind Smoke & Salt; a pop-up with the noble aim of rediscovering and adapting heritage cooking techniques to yield eye-opening, deeply satisfying food*



reputation is a hard thing to shake. Britain has always been the poor man of Europe for culinary diversity and excitement. If nations played *Come Dine with Me*, Britain would be the guy who scrambles his hollandaise and orders a takeaway. Visitors to these Isles have often described our food as varying shades of beige, boring and the most common dagger to the heart, bland.

That's not to say we didn't have great food being served in this country. The problem was that it was generally limited to stuffy shrines to the French classics, filled by only those whose wallets matched the silverware.

Fortunately over the last few decades there have been various food pioneers that have dragged the population, kicking and screaming, to a better, more flavourful world. River House Café, Moro and even Bibendum (at least while Simon Hopkinson was there) to name just a few, brought us phenomenal cuisine without the need for cloches. It wasn't traditional British fare, but it was cooked by British chefs that plated their passion alongside the food.

Before this new dawn, we had lost touch with our relationship with food. Food had become over-salted, overly-sugary and with ingredient lists more akin to that found in a chemist's than a kitchen. It was an era where instant gratification, the microwave and takeaway menu had become gospel. A revolution was well overdue and many credit a young Jamie Oliver for finally making cooking acceptable to a wider audience. He showed you didn't have to pre-weigh ingredients or wear a pinny.

This led to a rising momentum in the UK with London the platform for big-name chefs, trends and street food. Unfortunately with money comes ego, and parts of the restaurant industry can take itself a little too seriously. Bloggers have been widely harangued, food has become all smoke and mirrors, and fashion dictates more than flavour.

And yet there are some who believe there needs to be somewhat of an introspection of the soul and food should be food. We have seen gastronomic architecture, chemistry and magic from chefs across the globe. What is needed is a step back and a realisation that while novel exploits should be celebrated, food is meant to be enjoyed. Most people's fondest memories of food are of their mother's cooking, regardless of how much ash, foams or spherification she used.

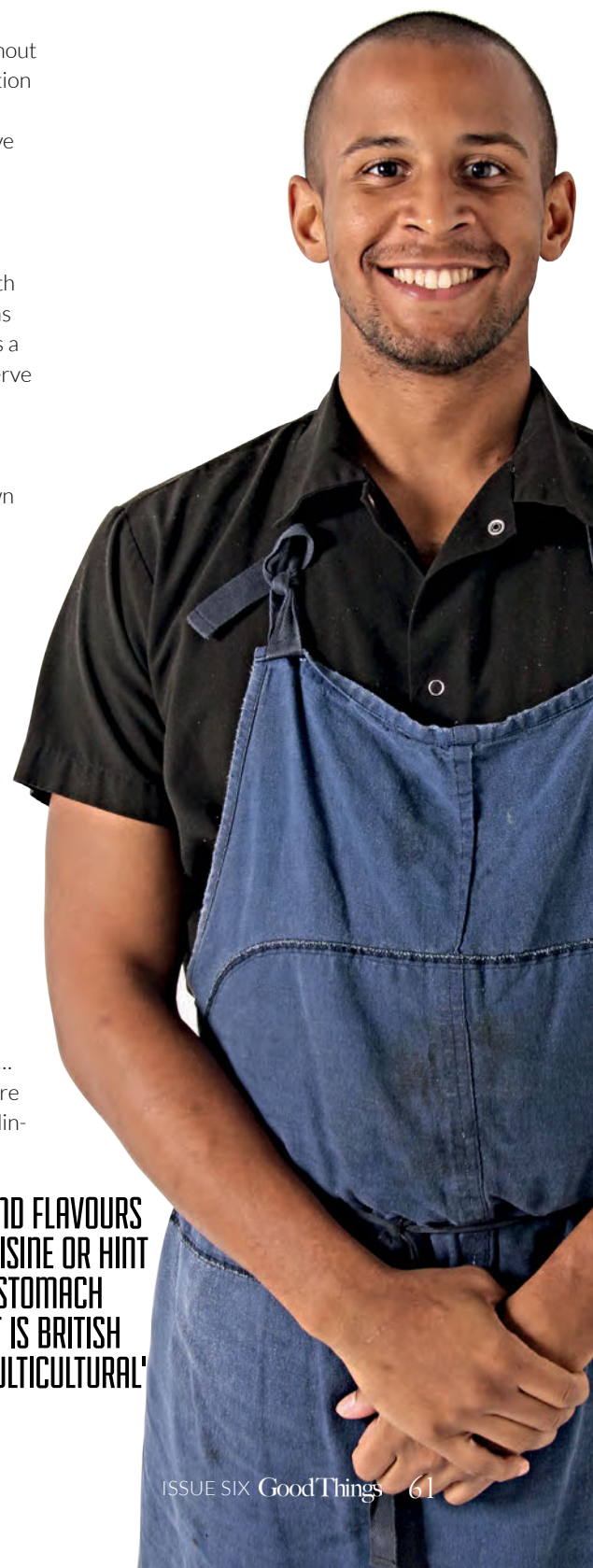
This is what the chefs and founders of Smoke & Salt, Remi Williams and Aaron Webster, want to bring back to London - a casual fine dining experience where food is honest, but also arrestingly flavoursome and beautiful. They want people to enjoy remarkable food, cooked with

passion and excitement, but without feeling imposed upon by reputation or ego. This is the affordable neighbourhood restaurant you've always wanted.

Between them they have over a decades' experience cooking in some of the best kitchens on both sides of the Atlantic. Williams has a strong sense of both himself as a chef and the food he wants to serve to Londoners. Although unsure of his career choice growing up, his drive comes from his hyper-critical approach towards his own efforts. Once set on cooking, he immediately took a position in the toughest and best kitchen in Boston. It was here that he learnt he loved food for what it is. His biggest inspirations came from chefs whose food is presented without overly-pretentious interpretations or deconstructions.

In contrast, Webster comes across strikingly laid back outside the kitchen, but talks with an infectious, almost nerdy, energy about gastronomy; 'Food excites me because there is so much variety, no two chefs would cook a dish the same way... it's clichéd but the possibilities are endless.' After working in Michelin-

**'SMOKE & SALT'S DISHES AND FLAVOURS SHOW NO LOYALTY TO A CUISINE OR HINT OF NATIONAL PRIDE. YOUR STOMACH IS TAKEN ON A JOURNEY. IT IS BRITISH FOOD, BUT AT ITS MOST MULTICULTURAL'**





starred restaurants for the best part of his career he has seen the best and the worst of the industry. He forged a strong sense of what a restaurant should represent and how staff and customers should be treated.

The two met in 2013 cooking in Notting Hill's The Shed. They quickly found that their style and philosophies were aligned and so, at the start of the year, decided it was time to go it alone and face London. That's not an easy decision to make when you live in a city with over eight million people, that has one of the fastest growing restaurant industries for competition and where around 80% of restaurants close in their first year.

Given their self-funded strategy, they have benefited from London's thriving pop-up culture. Currently advertised through GrubClub, they are offering a monthly dinner across two nights in Islington. This is the sharp end of the cooking world, where pipe-dreams become vulnerable and promises have to be kept. Williams and Webster need to be entrepreneur, salesman, craftsman and host all rolled into one. It's the Everest of learning curves.

The idea behind Smoke & Salt is an attempt to 're-discover and adapt heritage cooking techniques to provide honest food while still looking beautiful and welcoming'. In

its simplest form, this is about two chefs using traditional methods that enhance and alter the flavour and texture to produce food that doesn't try to trick or deceive the diner, where big, bold flavours are married together with exciting food partnerships. Brining, curing, fermenting, smoking and pickling are some of the methods employed. Cabbage becomes sauerkraut or even kimchi, salmon turns to silky gravlax and duck legs become lip-smacking confit hash.

Although the above sounds worryingly like a 'concept', the pair is keen to point out that these were not work-shopped by some Shoreditch PR agency. This is simply an expression of their belief that delicious food can be made using traditional and simple techniques. It is a reflection of the art of culinary pursuits.

**'THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY CAN TAKE ITSELF A LITTLE TOO SERIOUSLY - FOOD FULL OF SMOKE AND MIRRORS; FASHION DICTATING MORE THAN FLAVOUR. BUT THIS IS ABOUT TWO CHEFS USING TRADITIONAL METHODS TO CREATE EXCEPTIONAL FOOD THAT DOESN'T TRY TO TRICK OR DECEIVE THE DINER'**

The food itself conjures memories of the early Young Turks, however with the net of possibilities cast a little wider (the Ten Bells was unlikely to use umeboshi on its menus). The cooking is a blend of classic and contemporary techniques alongside elegant presentation. It's cooking for the sheer love of it, rather than being restricted by a rule book or too much navel-gazing.

The dishes and flavours show no loyalty to a cuisine or hint of national pride. Your stomach is taken from South America with citrus and chili ceviche (spiked with peach jam), to America with hickory-smoked umeboshi chicken and back to Britain with a medley of apple served three ways. It is British food but at its most multi-cultural. Think of the celebrated The Diary or even a paired-back Ledbury and you get a feel for the range and quality on offer.

It is refreshing watching two young men at the start of a realisation of a dream that has been a long time in the making. London is overdue a swing away from Michelin-starred presentation and overly-complex set menus. Londoners deserve to enjoy their food and not to have to fight it. Smoke & Salt would very much like to help.

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**For information on latest events and pop-ups from Smoke & Salt, visit [grubclub.com](http://grubclub.com) and search 'Smoke & Salt'**

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**E**xclusively for Good Things, Smoke & Salt has created a bespoke festive feast that will earn any cook a reputation as a chef not to be messed with.



## CHRISTMAS SMOKED SALMON

*Keeping things simple at Christmas is all about prior preparation. This recipe takes about 3 days of patience, but the final result is a stress-free and delicious first course.*

**Serves 8-10**

### INGREDIENTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| For the Christmas spice mix:                | » 55g light brown sugar                            |
| » 10g coriander seeds                       | » 1 orange, zest only                              |
| » 5g whole star anise or fennel seeds       | » 5g fresh ginger, finely chopped                  |
| » 5g cinnamon stick                         | » 50g parsley, leaves and stems, roughly chopped   |
| » 5g cloves                                 | » 50g coriander, leaves and stems, roughly chopped |
| » 20g black peppercorns                     |  |
| For the salmon:                             | » 1.2 kg side of salmon, scaled & de-boned         |
| » 45g ground Christmas spice mix (as above) |  |
| » 40g salt                                  |  |

### METHOD

For the Christmas spice mix, toast all the spices in a dry frying pan set over medium heat until fragrant, then roughly grind in a spice grinder or with a pestle and mortar. Reserve until required.

For the salmon, combine the Christmas spice mix with the salt and sugar in a mixing bowl, mixing until spices are evenly distributed.

In another mixing bowl, combine the orange zest, ginger, parsley, and coriander, and mix well.

Lay out a strip of clingfilm 10cm longer than the side of salmon on the worktop. Sprinkle with a third of the zest, ginger and herb mixture, followed by a third of the spice, salt and sugar mixture.

Place the fish on this herb and spice layer, skin-side down. Evenly sprinkle the remaining salt and spice mixture over the flesh of the fish, followed by the herb mixture; focusing on the thicker head-end of the fish.

Fold over the edges of the clingfilm, followed by another layer, squeezing out as much air as possible. Place on a tray, then store in the refrigerator for 2 days, flipping the fish after 24 hours.

After 2 days, unwrap the fish (the flesh should feel firmer to the touch) then rinse off the curing mixture under cold, gently running water; using as little water as possible.

Pat the fish dry with paper towels, then refrigerate for 24 hours on a rack before cold-smoking over your choice of flavoured wood chips (we like oak) for 1 hour.

After smoking, cool the salmon side in the fridge for 2 hours.

To serve, slice thinly, arrange on a platter, and serve with pickles or crème fraîche.



## TURKEY LIVER PARFAIT

A sure-fire way to impress your friends and family at a dinner party, a terrine is a 'cheffy' but easy way to use up any liver you may get with your Christmas turkey.

Serves 15

### INGREDIENTS

For the reduction:

- » 1 tbsp butter
- » 100g shallots, minced
- » 30g garlic, minced
- » 1 sprig thyme
- » 150g ruby port
- » 65g white port
- » 150g madeira
- » 45g brandy

For the parfait:

- » 400g turkey livers, soaked in milk for at least an hour to purge of any bitterness
- » 18g salt
- » 2g Prague powder (a specialist curing salt – buy online from [smokedust.co.uk](http://smokedust.co.uk))
- » 300g butter
- » 240g whole eggs

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 120 degrees, placing a baking tray half-filled with water on the middle shelf to make a 'bain marie'.

For the reduction, heat the butter in a frying pan set over a medium-low heat and sweat the shallots and garlic until softened but not coloured.

Add the thyme and alcohols to the pan, and bring to the boil, flaming off the alcohol if you like.

Continue cooking until the mixture reduces to a syrup, stirring occasionally to prevent it burning. When you are left with only around 100g, remove from the heat, take out the thyme sprig, and set aside to cool.

For the parfait, remove the livers from the milk, and season with both the salts.

Melt the butter in a pan without letting the temperature go above 50C, then remove from the heat and set aside.

Pureé the livers, eggs, and cooled reduction in a blender until smooth, then slowly incorporate the melted butter into the mixture.

Blitz for a further minute to ensure everything is combined.

Pass through muslin or a fine-meshed sieve, and pour into buttered, lined ovenproof ramekins.

Place the moulds in the bain marie in the preheated oven, and cover the whole baking tray with foil. Bake until the parfait reaches a temperature of 64C in the centres when tested with a temperature probe.

Remove the parfait from the oven and allow to cool – preferably, chill overnight in the refrigerator before unmoulding with a hot knife to serve.



## BRINED CHRISTMAS TURKEY

Cooking a juicy turkey should be as simple as just putting it into an oven and taking it out when it is done. By brining a turkey you keep it juicy and infuse loads of flavour into it; giving you a helping hand on Christmas Day.

Serves 8-10

### INGREDIENTS

For the brining liquid:

- » 4kg water
- » 750g salt
- » 500g sugar
- » 20g whole star anise
- » 10 cloves
- » 15 juniper berries
- » 20g black peppercorns
- » 3 heads garlic, skin on, halved
- » 2 bunches fresh sage
- » 10 lemons, halved
- » 4kg ice

For the turkey:

- » 4-5.5kg turkey

### METHOD

Put the water, salt, sugar, spices, garlic, and sage in a large saucepan, then squeeze in the juice from the halved lemons, followed by the squeezed lemon shells.

Bring the mixture to the boil, ensuring the salt and sugar have dissolved.

Pour the brine into a large bucket and immediately add the ice, stirring it into the brine until it has melted and the brine is cold.

Add the turkey to the brine, and leave to infuse for 3 days, refrigerated.

Remove the turkey from the brine and pat dry, allowing it to come up to room temperature for at least 8 hours before roasting as normal.







## CRANBERRY & BACON JAM

*On Christmas morning there's the urge to go a bit more decadent with your breakfast - maybe even throwing in a Bellini to start the day. Cranberries are synonymous with Christmas, and everyone loves bacon, so why not have this smoky treat on toast?*

Serves 8-10

### INGREDIENTS

- » 700g skinless smoked bacon, cut into 5cm cubes
- » 2 onions, roughly chopped
- » 4 cloves garlic, smashed
- » 10g salt
- » 200g light brown sugar
- » 2g ground black pepper
- » 180g cider vinegar
- » 2g whole star anise or fennel seeds
- » 2g ground cinnamon
- » 2g ground cloves
- » 170g fresh cranberries
- » 100g water
- » 2 oranges, zest and juice

### METHOD

In a large pan set over a medium-high heat, caramelise the bacon, fat-side down, until it turns golden in colour.

When some of the fat has melted out from the bacon, add the onion, garlic, and salt, reduce the heat to low, and cook, covered, until the onions start to turn translucent.

Add the sugar, black pepper, cider vinegar, and spices, then stir to dissolve the sugar. Increase the heat to medium, then cook to reduce the vinegar by ½.

Add the cranberries, water, and the orange zest and juice, and stir in well. Cook until the water has reduced, the bacon is tender, and the mixture is sweet and sticky.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly before placing the mixture in a blender, pulsing a few times, to yield a slightly sticky jam.

Check the seasoning, then spoon into a sterilised jar.

Great served on chunky pieces of grilled toast.

## SMOKE & SALT CHRISTMAS PUDDING

*Using mezcal, a smoked tequila-style drink from Mexico, adds notes of wood fire and smoke to your traditional Christmas pudding - something we here at Smoke & Salt definitely enjoy.*

Serves 15

### INGREDIENTS

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| For the fruit:   | » 400g plain flour      |
| » 400g mixed fruit (we like to use sultanas, currants, prunes and dates) | » ½ tsp salt            |
| » 300g mezcal  | » 2 ½ tsp baking soda   |
| For the pudding:   | » 1 tsp ground cinnamon |
| » 170g unsalted butter   | » 2 tsp ground ginger   |
| » 300g treacle   | » ½ tsp ground cloves   |
| » 225g sugar   | » ½ tsp ground nutmeg   |
| » seeds scraped from 1 vanilla pod                                       | » 2 eggs                |
|  | » 150ml full-fat milk   |

### METHOD

For the fruit, soak the mixed fruit in the mezcal for a minimum of 24 hours - or up to a week.

Put the butter, treacle, sugar, and vanilla seeds in a saucepan set over low heat, and warm together until just combined, without letting the mixture boil. Stir, then set aside to cool slightly.

Place all the dry ingredients in large bowl, and mix lightly to combine.

Once the warmed butter and sugar mixture is cool enough to dip a finger into (under 50C), crack in the eggs, then add the milk, and the soaked fruit with its liquid.

Slowly pour this mixture into the dry ingredients, whisking to combine. Ensure there are no lumps but do not overwork the flour - be especially careful if using a stand mixer!

Pour the pudding mixture into a greased and lined pudding basin.

To cook, either steam the prepared pudding in a roasting tin half-filled with water in the oven, or in a stove-top steamer.

The pudding is cooked when a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean - generally after about 1-1 ½ hours.

Allow to cool slightly before turning out and serving.





# *Tapas with an Asian persuasion*

Deena Kakaya loves the convivial nature of tapas. Together with Dhruv Baker, she presents an original, Asian-inspired spread that's easy to prepare and share with festive guests



© Kate Whitaker



## *'Tapas' is a fine concept*

'Tapas' is a Spanish term, and the custom has its roots in that country. I love the concept; centred around the idea that the best conversations are built over and around a series of miniature plates of food, with less preoccupation with the formality of all-consuming, full sit-down meals.

These mini plates are not insignificant or trivial by nature because they can be combined as a sophisticated set to replace a more traditional style of 'meal'. Picture people standing around a bar, chatting and eating their entire meal standing up and mingling, catching up on their day and winding down. What a fine, affable and hassle-free way of eating both cold and hot tapas: mixed olives and cheese, patatas bravas (fried diced potatoes served with salsa brava - a spicy tomato sauce, sometimes served also with mayo or allioli) or tortilla de patatas (Spanish omelette, containing fried chunks of potatoes and sometimes onion).

## *The world knows how to relax and nibble*

Although the fabulously convenient term 'tapas' is definitely Spanish in origin, the concept is global. In Venice they serve chichetti, which are a mix of vegetarian and meaty items often laid on a slice of bread or polenta, much like tapas, a custom which is believed to have originated with slices of bread or meat which Andalusian sherry drinkers used to cover their glasses between sips. In Korea, drinking establishments serve anju, which includes various types of seafood. In China dim sum appears from puffs of steam in restaurants often dedicated to producing dim sum alone, where these small plates of meat-, seafood- or vegetable-based morsels in myriad incarnations are devoured alongside the Chinese tradition of yum cha (tea-tasting). In the Middle East we find casual and irresistible dip-and-dine style mezze. A feast of hummus, fatoush (herby, bread and garden vegetable, zesty salads), falafel (chickpea fritters), pickled vegetables and much more leaves me satiated and unsure of just how much I have actually consumed. From my favourite Italian antipasto of grilled and marinated artichokes to the nostalgia-inducing myriad of Indian snacks of my childhood, the whole world is at it.

Both chef Dhruv Baker and I carry influences from Asia in our cooking and so we present six Asian-inspired tapas recipes that will work for fuss-free, sense-rousing and unforgettably fun dining. I have incorporated the Mediterranean elements of feta cheese and halloumi and combined them with Indian spice, and Dhruv has used ingredients such as aioli and squid which definitely say 'tapas'. Then there is the added thrill and surprise of some striking spice. But first, some help on the topic of easy entertaining...

## *Top tips for Asian tapas*

During this season, as many of us take to the indoors to shield ourselves against brash winds and hacking rains, and opt for radiator-warmth and sofa reassurance over the slicing cold, we will eat our way through dinner parties and casual dining. But what will we make?

- 1** Think about how the tapas go together. Diversity is fun and indulgent, but who wants to dip dim sum or a samosa in hummus?
- 2** Choose some items that you can make ahead; Vietnamese summer rolls made from rice paper sheets require no cooking so you can stuff them, roll them and leave them in the fridge ready to be served when needed.
- 3** Relax; it doesn't all have to be served on a plate ready to be picked up and wolfed down. Sometimes, the requirement of a little bit of assembling effort by the diners is a cheerful excuse for interaction. For example, little lettuce wraps can be filled by guests by whichever hot or cold ingredients you lay out.
- 4** Balance out heavier fried items such as spring rolls, samosa or pakora with light and fresh plates of salads; for instance, a fresh, zingy and light Asian rice noodle salad would work very nicely to refresh the senses.
- 5** Include a more substantial item, such as soup. Asian-style hot and sour soup (*see our 'A bowl of soul' feature*) will instantly ignite chilled limbs and spirits alike, and help to sate a yearning appetite.
- 6** Keep it seasonal and use whatever nature offers for optimum freshness and taste. The quality difference when using seasonal ingredients will only show your efforts off positively.
- 7** You could make and then freeze pastry-based snacks like spring rolls ahead of your party and lightly spritz with oil before baking - rather than deep-frying - for a leaner approach to entertaining.



Spring rolls happen to be one of the most frequently requested items whenever I entertain, and fortunately, they are easy to vary and keep interesting simply by changing the stuffing. Traditionally a mix of cabbage, beansprouts and tofu are used in the vegetarian form. But with my Indian-spiced beetroot, feta, and potato spring rolls, I am going for a burst of summery colour; salty and crumbly feta with sweet beetroot and some fluffy potato spiced with cumin, coriander and chilli. The colour of the beetroot is visible in the skin of the spring roll, making this an especially alluring 'tapa'. They are easy on the eye and the textures are contrasting with the crisp and thin spring roll pastry, silky beetroot, and moist potato.



## INDIAN-SPICED BEETROOT, FETA, AND POTATO SPRING ROLLS

Serves 8 – 10

### INGREDIENTS

For the filling:

- » 100g potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- » 15g chives, finely chopped
- » 125g feta, crumbled
- » 1 tsp cumin seeds
- » 2 tsp ground coriander
- » 1 large red chilli, finely chopped

- » 2 spring onions, chopped
- » 200g cooked beetroot, grated
- » ½ tsp fennel seeds
- » ½ lemon, juice only

For the spring rolls:

- » 15 sheets of spring roll pastry
- » oil, for deep-frying

### METHOD

Boil the potatoes until they are soft enough to pierce with a knife (this should take 10-12 minutes). Once they are cooked, drain and set aside to cool.

Combine the chives, feta, cumin, ground coriander, chopped chilli, spring onions, beetroot, and fennel seeds with the lemon juice, and mix well.

Once the potatoes have cooled, mash lightly until they just look crumbly (not smooth like mashed potato). Combine with the rest of the ingredients and set aside whilst you prepare the spring roll pastry.

Cut each square of spring roll sheet in half, to give two equal rectangles.

Leaving an inch border at the bottom and sides of the piece, place 1 tablespoon of mixture near the end of the rectangle, and roll into a tight cigar, keeping the sides tucked in all the while. (If the end of the sheet doesn't stick to the roll, dab a little water along the end to help it hold together – just ensure you allow the roll to dry out before you fry.)

Heat the oil in a deep pan and deep-fry the spring rolls until they are lightly golden.

Serve hot, accompanied by mint yoghurt or chutney.

I really do think that tapas should play with all the senses; awaken and excite them. This is why one of my biggest weaknesses happens to be chaat. I swoon visibly at the mention of these Indian street foods, especially bhel, that party snack which combines crispy puffed rice, dense chickpeas, moist potatoes and two tantalising chutneys - coriander and tamarind. For the full effect it is most definitely worth investing in some peppery, salty and pungent chaat masala. It doesn't smell so wonderful, but it will transform your chaat from a salad-like assembly to true chaat. The key ingredient is pungent black salt, so do be careful not to use it too liberally. My recipe for Chaat masala tofu in bhel has just that exciting mix of senses, colours and textures. The moist and spongy tofu is encased in a crisp, chaat masala-spiked shell and then allowed to mingle with more traditional bhel ingredients of potato, chickpeas, puffed rice and pomegranate. This recipe is also quite filling, so your guests will not go hungry.





## BHEL WITH CHAAT MASALA TOFU

Serves 4 – 6

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 large potato, peeled and diced
- » approximately 400g firm tofu, drained and wrapped in kitchen paper to remove excess moisture
- » 5 tsp chaat masala
- » 30g cornflour
- » oil, for deep-frying
- » 15g fresh coriander, finely chopped
- » 1 tin black chickpeas (kala chana), drained
- » 2-3 spring onions, chopped
- » seeds of ½ a pomegranate
- » 50g cashew nuts, toasted
- » 50g puffed rice (available in most Asian shops or supermarkets with an ethnic section)

### METHOD

Boil the potatoes for approximately 8 minutes or until they are soft enough to pierce with a knife. Once they are cooked, drain and set aside to cool.

In a bowl, combine the tofu, 4 tsp of the chaat masala, and the cornflour.

Pour oil for deep-frying into a deep saucepan set over medium-high heat, and allow to get hot. Gently drop the tofu pieces into the oil, and fry in batches until they are crisp and lightly golden (they cook within minutes, so do take care). Remove from the oil and drain on kitchen paper.

For the bhel mixture, combine the potatoes, coriander, chickpeas, spring onions, remaining chaat masala, the pomegranate seeds, and the toasted cashew nuts in a large bowl, and toss together.

Once the tofu pieces have cooled slightly, add to the bhel mixture. Add the puffed rice and toss well.

Serve the bhel immediately to avoid the mixture losing its signature crunch. Serve with tamarind chutney.

*Thank goodness tapas are consumed in small portions because my recipe for Tandoori halloumi is indulgent, aromatic and irresistible. When halloumi is cooked in the oven this way it loses some of its saltiness and chewiness and gives way to a lighter, more accessible and delicately juicy texture. The tandoori spices in the marinade soak through the halloumi and are utterly generous. The marinade is startlingly easy to whip up and you could simply submerge the halloumi in the mixture for a few hours or overnight and then pop them in the oven as your guests arrive. This tapa is definitely one that appears trickier to cook than it really is.*



## TANDOORI HALLOUMI

Serves 4-6

### INGREDIENTS

- » 4 dsp plain natural yoghurt
- » 1 tsp ground cumin
- » 1 tsp ground coriander
- » 1 tsp paprika
- » pinch of salt (remember that the halloumi is salty)
- » ½ tsp garam masala
- » 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1 tsp ginger paste
- » 2 cloves garlic, minced
- » 1 tsp tomato pureé
- » 250g halloumi, cut into 16 equal pieces

### METHOD

In a blender, combine the yoghurt with the ground cumin, ground coriander, paprika, pinch of salt, and garam masala, and blitz until smooth.

Add the oil, ginger paste and minced garlic, mix, and then add the tomato pureé. Tip the marinade into a large bowl.

Drain any excess moisture from the halloumi, then toss well in the marinade, cover, and place in the refrigerator to marinate for 4 hours, or overnight if you have time.

When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 180C. Place the marinated halloumi chunks on a sheet of baking paper, leaving an inch or so between the chunks to allow the cheese to spread.

Bake the halloumi for 15 minutes, and then increase the heat to 200C and cook for a further 7-10 minutes, until the cheese is brown and crisp on the top.

Serve hot.





For an extravagant and indulgent option, Dhruv suggests his recipe for Deep-fried mussels with saffron aioli. Dhruv's recipe plays with the senses by contrasting the soft mussels and their crunchy exterior. The heat from the chilli and the creaminess and fragrance of the saffron aioli make this a standout dish. The recipe calls for breadcrumbs rather than semolina for an extra crunch.

## DEEP-FRIED MUSSELS WITH SAFFRON AIOLI

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1kg live mussels
- » 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1 shallot, finely chopped
- » 50ml white wine
- » ½ tsp fennel seeds
- » 100g dried breadcrumbs
- » 60g plain flour
- » 2 eggs, beaten
- » oil, for deep-frying
- » 1 lemon
- » salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the saffron aioli:

- » 150ml good-quality mayonnaise
- » few strands saffron, soaked in 2 tsp warm water
- » 1 clove garlic, crushed
- » 1 tsp lemon juice
- » Pinch caster sugar
- » 1 tsp finely chopped fresh coriander

### METHOD

Rinse the mussels well in cold water and scrub any that are particularly dirty. Discard any open ones and those which do not close when gently tapped against the worktop. If any have rust-coloured fibres (beards) attached to them, pull them firmly away.

Heat the oil in a large pan, then add the chopped shallot and fry for a couple of minutes. Add the mussels and wine, stir thoroughly, cover and cook for 2 minutes or until the mussels open up.

Carefully remove the mussels from the shells, discarding any that remain closed.

Stir the fennel seeds into the breadcrumbs and season with salt and pepper. Toss the mussels in the flour, then dip in the beaten egg and finally in the seasoned breadcrumbs.

Heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pan to 190°C/375°F, or until a cube of bread sizzles and turns golden in about 20 seconds. Alternatively use a deep-fryer. Deep-fry mussels in batches for 1-2 minutes, then remove and drain on kitchen paper. Squeeze over some lemon juice.

Mix together the mayonnaise, saffron (with the soaking water), garlic, lemon juice, sugar and coriander and stir well to combine. Serve immediately along with the deep-fried mussels.



## CHICKEN LOLLIPOPS

Serves 6-8 as a snack

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1kg chicken wings
- » oil, for deep frying
- » 1 lime, cut into wedges

For the batter:

- » 100g plain flour
- » 50g cornflour
- » 4 tsp garlic and ginger paste
- » ½ tsp red chilli powder
- » 1 tsp paprika
- » 2 green finger chillies, seeded and very finely chopped (for extra heat, leave the seeds in one of the chillies)
- » ½ tsp salt
- » ½ tsp garam masala
- » Juice of 1-3 limes
- » 1 tsp fennel seeds
- » ½ tsp black pepper





## METHOD

First make your 'lollipops'. Use a sharp knife to separate the wings at the joint. You'll need only the biggest part of the wing so set the smaller two joints aside and use them to make chicken stock later. Take each large joint and, using a very sharp knife, scrape the meat towards the thick end of the joint so that you end up with the meat at one end and a clean bone at the other end.

Mix together all ingredients for the batter in a large bowl and beat until thick and smooth. Place the chicken lollipops in the batter and leave to marinate for 1-2 hours.

Put the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pan and heat to 180°C/350°F – a cube of bread should sizzle and turn brown in about 20 seconds. Deep-fry the chicken, in batches, for about 5 minutes. Remove and drain on kitchen paper.

Serve immediately with lime wedges to squeeze over.

*They say that some of the best recipes are the product of hunger, and tapas probably more so than other recipes as nibbling at the little dishes helps keep hunger at bay. This is also true of Dhruv's recipe for Sweet chilli squid, which he associates with a trip to a food market in Goa when famished, admiring the locally-available fresh seafood. This impressive and simple dish is quick to conjure up for a crowd, and will inject instant warmth into any gathering.*

## SWEET CHILLI SQUID WITH SAMPHIRE

Serves 4-6

### INGREDIENTS

- » 750g fresh squid (5-6 small squid is ideal)
- » 75g cornflour
- » oil, for deep-frying
- » 100g samphire (optional)
- » 15g unsalted butter
- » 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- » 1 tsp golden caster sugar
- » ½ tsp chilli powder
- » 1 lemon
- » salt and freshly ground black pepper

### METHOD

Prepare the squid. First pull the tentacles away from the main body and then remove the beak from the centre of the tentacles. Carefully remove the quill (the almost plastic-like clear strip) from the body, then insert a thumb under the wings or fins and pull them away. Finally pull the membrane away from the body to leave a clean squid 'pouch'. Cut along one side of the pouch to create a flat piece of squid.

Using a very sharp knife, score diagonal lines across the squid at 5mm intervals to give a criss-cross pattern. Cut each squid piece into 3-4 cm rectangles and slice the tentacles in half lengthways. Coat the squid pieces in the cornflour.

Heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pan to 190°C/375°F (a cube of bread should sizzle and turn golden brown in 20 seconds). Alternatively heat the oil in a deep-fryer. Deep-fry the squid in batches for about 2-3 minutes until crisp. Remove and drain on kitchen paper.

Cook the samphire, if using, in a large pan of boiling water or steamer for 1-2 minutes; drain.



Put a large frying pan over a medium heat and add the butter. When it starts to foam add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds before adding the sugar, chilli powder and salt and pepper. Add the drained samphire and squid pieces and toss in the butter.

Serve immediately with a squeeze of lemon.



All Dhruv Baker recipes © 'SPICE: Layers of Flavour' by Dhruv Baker, published by Wedenfeld & Nicholson



# The ultimate cross-cultural festive feast

A multicultural society is something to celebrate at any time of year, and each community's own festivals offer another chance to do so.

Zoe Perrett commemorates  
Christmas - and all else that's on





Why would one solely commemorate Christmas when they could expand their horizons, social circle, and, inevitable, their waistline through the incorporation and celebration of other cultural festivals? That attitude is certainly not the sole preserve of the author – living in an increasingly-diverse society, it's accepted if not expected that we not only all recognise but also share global traditions.

There's no better season than winter to evoke the cockle-warming feelings that come from breaking bread with others – whether they're from down the road, the other side of the country, or clean across the ocean. Food tastes better when it has a heritage; in the cold, dark months when we all need a little lift, this season becomes even more essential.

Come December, Christmas piles a lot on the plate, but it doesn't need to be British. Recipes plucked from Christian communities the world over can bring something to the table that's thoroughly traditional, yet entirely new to you.

Room for more? Don't just stick to Christmas for the meal you eat on that day. Food is a key feature in festivals occurring around the world around the same time of year. With so many countries' cuisines ever-more accessible, you can make your magpie menu as mixed up as you see fit.

And if you're keen to really go 'the whole hog' when laying on a multicultural, multi-faith meal, how about including some Scottish Hogmanay specialities? New Year may not arrive until January, but over the holiday season everyone knows it's never too soon to start celebrating.

And no-one knows so well as the marvellously motley crew of chefs who've compiled Good Things' ultimate festive feast...



## *Christmas, and then some. What else is on in winter?*

### *Hanukkah*

The Jewish 'festival of lights' occurs over eight nights and celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple. The centrally symbolic item is the menorah – a candelabra that holds eight candles, with one more ignited on each subsequent evening until all are alight. Oil, a tiny amount of which kept the temple flame ablaze, is used in copious quantities to fry foods like savoury potato latkes and sweet, doughnut-like sufganiyot with various fillings.

### *Kwanzaa*

The festival of Kwanzaa (above) is a thoroughly modern affair; only observed since the 1960s, when it was founded by Maulana Karenga in order to reconnect African Americans with their heritage. It begins on 26th December and continues through to New Year's Day, when there's a fulsome feast and gifts are given. The celebrations are built around seven core principles, collectively called 'Nguzo saba'.

### *Hogmanay*

In Scotland, New Year's Eve is big business, celebrated with oft-whisky-soaked feasts that culminate in rousing renditions of the traditional song, 'Auld Lang Syne'. After midnight, it's time for 'first footing' – a custom whereby the first person (preferably a tall, dark male) to cross the threshold of a neighbour's dwelling brings luck by giving gifts including shortbread, whisky and the rich fruitcake, black bun, which are then distributed to guests to ensure further auspice.

### *Winter Solstice festival*

This festival is observed in China and East Asia, celebrated in the 11<sup>th</sup> lunar month, on or around 22nd December. It is closely aligned with the principle of 'yin and yang'; the belief being that the former's darkness and cold and the light and warmth of the latter are in perfect harmony on the shortest day of the year. It's all about optimism, and sharing food with family (*see recipes*).



## What's on the world table at Christmas?

### Papua New Guinea

A pit-cooked feast of banana leaf-wrapped fish and vegetables in coconut milk; accompanied by boiled taro, bananas, and 'pit pit' – creamy flower buds.

### Russia

A steady procession of 12 vegetarian dishes honouring the apostles and commemorating the dead, including borscht (beetroot soup) and roasted carp.

### Scandinavia

Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark share many dishes, although each has a unique culture. Across the area, typical Christmas fare includes items like pickled herrings (see recipes), smoked salmon, lutefisk (dried cod), meatballs (see recipes), and baked ham. A glass of glögg (traditional mulled wine, (see recipes) or Christmas beer is essential.

### Italy

The major meal is the Christmas Eve 'Cenone' – a fish supper often featuring a specimen that's cooked whole as its centrepiece.

### Sicily

The pasta 'pie' timballo di maccheroni (see recipes) is popular on Christmas Day; left to cook whilst families are at church.

### Britain

Today the country is known for the traditional turkey lunch (see recipes), but the 'cockatrice' that dates back to the Middle Ages is a larger affair; consisting of seven birds of ever-decreasing size, separated with forcemeat, and roasted until cooked through.

### Spain

Turkey is a popular choice for the main Christmas feast, the 'Cena de Nochebuena': indeed, it was the country's conquistadors who first introduced the bird to the area.

### Ghana

Barbecued meat – often goat; with foo-foo (pounded yams) and rice.

### Brazil

Turkey is often on the table as part of the Christmas Eve 'Ceia'. The pungent marinade for the 'Peru a Brasileira' is vinha d'alho – the same mixture that eventually evolved into Goa's vindaloo. Rice dishes are also ever-present (see recipes).

### Barbados

Amongst a vast festive buffet is jug-jug; a minced, mixed meat speciality that's often described as 'Bajan haggis'.

### Mexico

Turkey is served either stuffed or in the traditional mole poblano sauce; a dark, complex gravy consisting of dozens of ingredients including chillies, seeds, ground tortillas, and cocoa. The Christmas salad ensalada Navideña also appears.

### Canada

Tourtière is a speciality of the French Canadian community; a spicy pork pie that is served as part of the Christmas Eve 'réveillon'.

## Cracking Christmas food symbolism

- In Poland, sheaves of grain are tied to orchard trees on Christmas night to ensure a plentiful harvest the year following
- In Sweden, a bowl of rice porridge is set out to appease tomte – the Christmas gnome
- In Britain, the traditional 'wassail' bowl gave us the term 'to toast to one's health'. In the past, a bowl was carried from house to house by well-wishers, filled with an ale punch which was topped with charred pieces of bread
- In American's Deep South, finding a shiny penny in your collard greens is considered lucky

## Where to try a new festive feast

The Christmas period offers ample opportunity to explore new restaurants and discover some surprising seasonal fare as you will see on the following pages

- Swedish at FIKA [fikalondon.com](http://fikalondon.com)
- Indian at Curry Leaf Cafe (see our review, page 24) [curryleafcafe.com](http://curryleafcafe.com)
- Brazilian at Carioca (see our review, page 26) [twitter.com/Cariocabrixton](https://twitter.com/Cariocabrixton)
- Lebanese at Comptoir Libonais [lecomptoir.co.uk](http://lecomptoir.co.uk)
- South African at Shaka Zulu [shaka-zulu.com](http://shaka-zulu.com)
- World food with an Indo-Scots accent at The Old Bakehouse [theoldbakehouserestaurant.com](http://theoldbakehouserestaurant.com)
- Italian at Locanda Locatelli [locandalocatelli.com](http://locandalocatelli.com)



# Five recipes for a Swedish feast

## GLÖGG

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

For the glögg:

- » 1 bottle red wine
- » 80g caster sugar

For the spices:

- » 1 big stick of cinnamon or two small (about 7g)
- » 5g dried ginger
- » 10 whole cloves
- » 5 whole green cardamom pods
- » 1 piece (about 5g) dried Seville orange peel (you can substitute with another dried orange peel although it will not be as bitter)

To serve:

- » flaked almonds and raisins

### METHOD

Pour the wine into a saucepan and add the sugar and all the spices. Heat until the mixture is hot, but not boiling (around 80C - anything above and the alcohol will start to evaporate). Turn off the heat and leave to infuse for 1 hour or more.

Strain the glögg to remove the spices.

Serve warm in small cups, with a teaspoon of flaked almonds and raisins added.

*Recipe courtesy of Scandi Kitchen's Brontë Aurell [scandikitchen.co.uk](http://scandikitchen.co.uk)*

#### TIP

a dash of cognac or rum can be added to the finished product for extra warmth

## CHRISTMAS PICKLED HERRING

Serves 6 - 8

### INGREDIENTS

For the herring:

- » 1.5l water
- » 100g salt
- » 1kg herring

For the pickling liquor:

- » 150ml ättiksprit (strong Swedish vinegar) or 200ml white wine vinegar
- » 300ml water
- » 200g sugar
- » 100g salt
- » 1 tbsp whole white pepper
- » ½ tbsp whole black pepper
- » 4 bay leaves
- » 3 star anise
- » 2 cinnamon sticks
- » 4 onions, halved
- » 300g dill
- » 2 tsp cloves



### METHOD

For the herring, bring the water and salt to the boil in a large saucepan. Leave to cool, then add the herring and leave for 24 hours.

For the pickling liquor, bring all ingredients to the boil then reduce to a simmer for 15 minutes. Allow to cool.

Drain the herring from the salt water, give the fish a quick rinse, and place in the cooled pickling liquor.

Leave for 2 days before eating with bread and pickles.

*Recipe courtesy of FIKA restaurant [fikalondon.com](http://fikalondon.com)*

## CREAM SAUCE Serves 8 as an accompaniment

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 tbsp butter
- » 1 onion, roughly chopped
- » 1 tart apple, roughly chopped
- » 1 tbsp rice flour
- » 300ml double cream
- » 100ml reduced stock (made by boiling stock to a thick, jellylike consistency - or you can buy ready-made 'gelled' stock)
- » 1 tbsp soy sauce

### METHOD

Over a low heat, melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the onion and apple and fry gently.

Add the rice flour to the mixture and fry until golden, stirring regularly to avoid the mixture catching.

When golden, slowly add the cream and bring to a boil. Allow to simmer for a few minutes.

Add the reduced stock and the soy sauce, then simmer to thicken the sauce until it coats the back of a spoon.

Pass the sauce through a sieve to remove the onion and apple pieces and serve hot - it works brilliantly with Swedish meatballs (see recipe).

*Recipe courtesy of FIKA restaurant [fikalondon.com](http://fikalondon.com)*





## SWEDISH MEATBALLS

Serves 8

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1kg maris piper potatoes
- » 1 tsp salt
- » 1 tsp cracked pepper
- » 1 tsp paprika
- » 2 medium onions, pureéd
- » 1kg minced beef
- » 1 egg
- » 50-60g breadcrumbs, to bind
- » 3 sprigs parsley, finely chopped, to garnish

### METHOD

Boil the potatoes in salted water for about 20 minutes until just tender when pierced. Drain and reserve the cooked potatoes until required.

Add the salt and spices to the onion purée, then combine with the minced beef.

Add the egg and just enough breadcrumbs to bind the mixture, to yield a smooth, firm mixture that's easy to manage.

Roll the mixture into small balls weighing around 30g each.

To cook, either pan-fry in a little olive oil, or bake in an oven set to 180C for 8-10 minutes.

While the meatballs cook, mash the potatoes and season to taste.

To serve, divide the mashed potatoes and meatballs between dinner plates, garnish with parsley, and pass round a jug filled with a sauce of your choice at the table (try cream sauce – see recipe).

*Recipe courtesy of FIKA [fikalondon.com](http://fikalondon.com)*



## JANSSON'S TEMPTATION

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 tbsp butter
- » 2 onions, finely sliced
- » 9-10 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ cm sticks (a bit smaller than 'fries' size)
- » 20 fillets (1 ½ tins) Grebbestad's Anchovis (available from Scandi Kitchen - these are pickled sprats, not actually anchovies - which are too salty for this)
- » salt and pepper
- » 300ml milk-cream mix, made with 150ml each of cream and full-fat milk
- » 1 tbsp dried breadcrumbs

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200C.

Heat the butter in a saucepan and add the onion and cook until soft (a few minutes, taking care not to burn). Add the potatoes and leave for another few minutes to start the cooking process. Take off the heat.

In an ovenproof dish add half the potato/onion mixture, then place about 10 sprat fillets evenly across. Season with salt and pepper. Add another layer of potato-onion mixture and the rest of the sprat fillets. Add 200ml of the milk-

cream mix to the dish and sprinkle breadcrumbs on top. Season again.

Bake for about 45 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked. Half way through, check the moisture level and add the rest of the milk-cream mix. If the dish feels a bit dry you can add a bit more milk. You want a creamy consistency.

Serve as part of a traditional Swedish smörgåsbord, or any festive feast.

*Recipe courtesy of Scandi Kitchen's Brontë Aurell [scandikitchen.co.uk](http://scandikitchen.co.uk)*



# A more multi-cultural spread



## South Africa

### BLACK MUSSELS IN SAFFRON AND REDCURRANT CREAM

Serves 2

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1 onion, finely chopped
- » 1 tsp curry powder
- » 1 punnet redcurrants
- » 550ml white wine
- » pinch of saffron, soaked in 2 tbsp boiling water
- » 1 medium tomato, finely chopped
- » 36 black mussels (discard any that are open)
- » 125ml double cream
- » 2 handfuls baby spinach
- » 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

#### METHOD

Heat the oil in a large, lidded, heavy-bottomed saucepan set over medium-high heat and sauté the onion, then add the curry powder, redcurrants, wine, and the saffron and its soaking liquid.

Stir well to combine, then add the tomato, followed by the mussels, and cover the pan with the lid and steam for 3-4 minutes until the mussels open (discarding any that stay closed).

Add the cream and baby spinach to the pan, stir, season to taste, and add the parsley.

Serve immediately, in a traditional South African potjie pot or clay pot, accompanied by crusty bread.

*Recipe courtesy of Steven Boucher, executive chef at Shaka Zulu [shaka-zulu.com](http://shaka-zulu.com)*

## Brazil

### CHRISTMAS RICE WITH SALT COD AND RED LENTILS

*The Brazilian Christmas menu is heavily-influenced by the Portuguese; especially their bacalhau (salt cod) dishes. On Christmas Day, we serve this in small portions as a starter, or as the main course.*

Serves 5 as a main course or at least 10 as a starter

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 400g rice
- » 150g red lentils
- » 120g salt cod, soaked in milk overnight, rinsed, and left in water for 3 hours
- » olive oil
- » 2 medium onions, finely sliced
- » 5 tomatoes, each deseeded and cut into 8 pieces
- » 3 eggs
- » 100g pitted green olives
- » 1 heaped tbsp chopped spring onion, green part only
- » cracked green peppercorns

#### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180C.

Cook the rice and the lentils in separate pans, then drain. Meanwhile, rinse the cod, place in a saucepan with cold water, and bring to the boil.

Heat a touch of olive oil in a frying pan, and add the two onions. Fry over a low heat until they are light golden-brown, then remove from the pan and set aside.

Place the tomato pieces on an oven tray and roast until collapsing and slightly charred. Meanwhile, hard-boil the eggs, peel, and slice each egg into 5 thick slices.

Flake the cod into large pieces and lightly fry it in the same pan as you

cooked the onions, adding a little more olive oil if required.

Add the olives and fry over a low heat, then add the cooked, drained rice and lentils, and mix well. Add the cracked green peppercorns, mix well, and remove from the heat.

Divide amongst serving dishes, sprinkle the chopped spring onion over the rice, and decorate with the fried onions, sliced eggs, and roasted tomatoes before serving hot.

*Recipe courtesy of Eusebio Goncalves and the team at Carioca restaurant [twitter.com/Cariocabrixton](https://twitter.com/Cariocabrixton)*





## British Indian

### CAULIFLOWER AND GINGER PAKORAS

*This is a great way to use up leftover cauliflower or in fact any veg; it works well with broccoli or asparagus.*

Makes 24 (to serve about 12)

#### INGREDIENTS

- » ½ small cauliflower, broken into small florets
- » 1 large red onion, peeled and sliced
- » 1 carrot, peeled and cut into 5cm matchsticks
- » ½ red pepper, sliced
- » into 5cm matchsticks
- » 1 tbsp chopped coriander
- » 1½ tsp garam masala
- » ¼ tsp chilli powder
- » 1 tsp salt
- » 200g gram flour
- » vegetable oil, for frying

#### METHOD

Place all the prepared vegetables in a large bowl. Add the chopped coriander, spices and salt and mix well. Leave for 5 minutes.

Add the gram flour to the bowl and mix well, then add 3 or 4 teaspoons of water and mix it well. You are aiming for a batter that holds the veg together. The veg should still be visible and the batter shouldn't be too wet otherwise the pakoras will not be crispy when cooked.

Heat 5cm of vegetable oil in a shallow pan. Test it is hot enough by throwing in a cube of bread – it should brown in about 1 minute.

When the oil is hot, spoon in tablespoons of the mixture until you have about 5 in the pan. Press down a little with the back of a spoon to flatten them slightly (they should be roughly 4cm wide) and cook on each side till golden and crispy.

Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon, drain on kitchen paper and keep warm while you cook the remainder of the pakoras. Serve warm with chutney.

*Recipe extracted from Tony Singh's 'Tasty', published by Headline*



## Kerala

### ERACHI ULARTHIYATHU – BEEF FRY

*This dish is very popular Christmas fare amongst the Christian community of Kerala. This 10-minute recipe comes from 'Mrs. Rajan' - the mother of one of chef Kanthi Thamma's friends.*

Serves 2 as a main course, 4 as a starter

#### INGREDIENTS:

For the masala:

- » 2 dried red chillies
- » 4 whole green cardamom pods
- » 2 tbsp coriander seeds
- » 4 cloves
- » 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- » 2 whole star anise
- » 3-inch piece cinnamon stick
- » 8 black peppercorns
- » 1 tsp ground turmeric

For the dish:

- » 400g fillet steak, cubed

- » 2 tbsp coconut oil (or vegetable oil)
- » 1 tsp black mustard seeds
- » 10 fresh curry leaves, washed, plus extra for garnish
- » 10g fresh coconut slivers
- » 50g onion, finely sliced
- » 15g fresh ginger, Julienned
- » 3 cloves garlic, Julienned
- » salt, to taste
- » 2 fresh green chillies, halved lengthways

#### METHOD

For the masala, toast all the spices except turmeric in a dry frying pan set over medium heat for 2 minutes, then grind into a powder with the turmeric. Reserve until required.

Rub the cubed beef with half of this masala, reserving the remainder until required.

Heat the oil in a pan set over medium heat, and add the mustard seeds.

Once they start popping, add the curry leaves and sliced coconut pieces. Give them a quick stir for about 30 seconds, then add the onion.

After 1 minute, add the ginger, garlic, salt and green chillies. Sauté for 4-5 minutes until the onion starts to brown.

Add the reserved masala and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the beef and stir-fry, ensuring all the meat pieces are well-coated with the spice mixture.

When the meat is cooked to your liking, remove from the heat and tip onto a serving dish, adding the curry leaves to garnish.

Serve immediately, accompanied by parathas, chapattis, dosa, or appams as a main course; or alone as a starter.

*Recipe courtesy of head chef Kanthi Thamma at Curry Leaf Cafe (see 'Team Favourites', page 24, for our review) [curryleafcafe.com](http://curryleafcafe.com)*





# Taiwan

## MIGAO - STEAMED SAVOURY STICKY RICE

Serves 8

### INGREDIENTS

- » 250g glutinous rice
- » 3 - 4 salted duck egg yolks, halved (optional)
- » a little vegetable oil
- » approximately 225g stewed pork (see recipe), or leftover stewed meat of your choice
- » 375ml water
- » 3 tsp light sauce
- » 2 tsp dark soy
- » 2 tsp sesame oil
- » pinch of ground white pepper

### METHOD

Rinse and soak the rice for about 2 hours, then drain of excess water.

Grease individual pudding basins or rice bowls with a little vegetable oil.

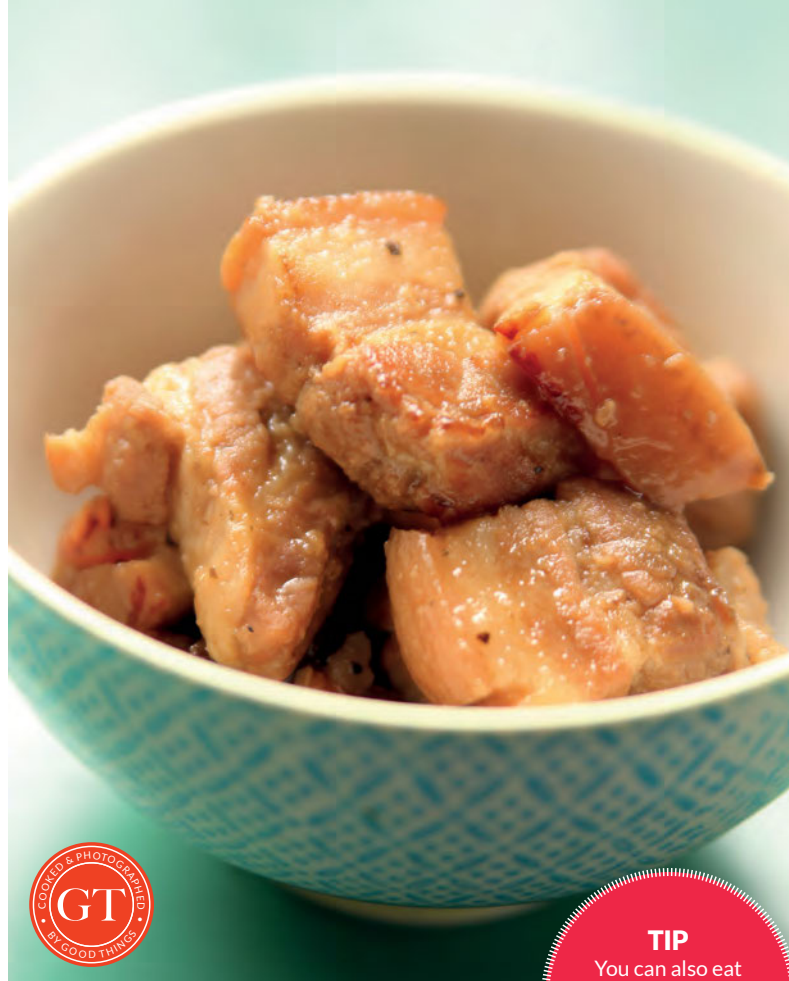
Put a piece of salted egg yolk on the bottom of each basin or bowl (if using), then add 2 - 3 tbsp of stewed meat. Press down to eliminate any trapped air.

Spoon the soaked rice into the basins or bowls, leaving about ½ cm at the top for the rice to expand, and press down with the spoon.

Mix the water with the light and dark soy, sesame oil, and ground white pepper, and fill the basins with just enough of this liquid to come up to the level of the rice.

Steam over high heat for 30 - 35 minutes until cooked through, then switch off the heat and leave in the steamer for about 10 minutes to cool slightly.

Serve in the basins or bowls, or turned out onto serving plates.



### TIP

You can also eat the stew as is; simply accompanied by boiled rice.

## STEWED PORK

Serves 8-10 as a main – and fills many migao!

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2-3 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1 thumb-sized piece fresh ginger, chopped
- » 5 - 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- » 1.2kg pork belly or shoulder (with skin and fat), cut into 1.5cm cubes
- » 40g dried shitake mushrooms, soaked and cut into small pieces, soaking liquid reserved
- » 2-3 tbsp dried shrimps, rinsed
- » 1 heaped tsp Chinese five spice powder
- » few peppercorns, crushed
- » 6 tbsp light soy sauce
- » 3 tbsp dark soy sauce
- » 3 whole star anise
- » 1 small piece cassia bark or cinnamon
- » 2 tbsp caster sugar
- » 60ml rice wine
- » 60g crispy-fried shallots (available from Asian grocers), crushed

### METHOD

Heat the oil in a large deep pan set over high heat, then add the ginger and garlic. Stir for 1 minute then add the pork. Sauté for 5 minutes until the pork is lightly browned.

Add the mushrooms, dried shrimps, Chinese five spice, peppercorns, light and dark soy, star anise, cassia bark, and sugar. Stir-fry for 2 minutes, then add the rice wine, the mushroom soaking liquid, and just enough water to cover the meat.

Bring to the boil, then cover the pan and simmer on low heat for about 1 hour until the meat is tender.

Add the crushed crispy-fried shallots and simmer for 5 minutes more. Check seasoning, remove from the heat, and use as a filling for the Migao (see recipe).





## Mauritius

### GOAT CURRY

Best made a day before you want to eat it! Serves 3-4

#### INGREDIENTS

For the chilli paste:

- » 1 small onion, roughly chopped
- » 4 garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
- » 4 small birdseye chillies, deseeded and roughly chopped
- » 3cm piece fresh ginger, roughly chopped
- » ½ tsp sea salt
- » 1 tbsp olive oil

For the sauce:

- » 2 tbsp mild curry powder (or Mauritian curry powder if you can get it)
- » ¾ tbsp ground cumin
- » ¾ tbsp ground coriander
- » ¾ tbsp turmeric
- » 1 tbsp garam masala
- » ½ tbsp ground cinnamon
- » 150ml water

For the meat:

- » 3 tbsp olive oil
- » 750g goat meat, chopped into 2-2.5cm cubes
- » 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- » 1 tomato, roughly chopped
- » 6 curry leaves, finely chopped
- » 200ml canned chopped tomatoes
- » 175ml white wine
- » 1 tsp salt
- » 2 spring onions, chopped
- » 2 tbsp fresh coriander, roughly chopped

#### METHOD

For the chilli paste, place all ingredients into a food processor, blitz to a paste, and set aside.

For the sauce, mix all ingredients together in a bowl to yield a wet paste. Set aside.

For the meat, heat 2 tbsp of the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and fry the meat chunks in batches until golden-brown all over. Remove the meat and any juices from the pan and set aside.

Add the remaining 1 tbsp of olive oil to the pan, and tip in the reserved chilli paste. Fry for 2 minutes until fragrant, then add in the chopped thyme, chopped fresh tomato, and curry leaves and give it a good stir.

Add the reserved curry paste to the pan and stir, keeping the mixture moving so it doesn't burn and the spices gently roast.

Tip in the chopped canned tomatoes and return the reserved meat and its juices to the pan. Then add the wine, and enough water to just about cover the meat. Stir, then add the salt.

Cover the pan and let the curry cook on the hob on the lowest heat for 2 – 3 hours or until the meat is tender and falling apart (check at regular intervals after the first 2 hours of cooking). When ready, the sauce should appear glossy.

Check the sauce for seasoning, then scatter over the spring onion and coriander to serve. Eat with rice, or faratas and pickle the Mauritian way!

*Recipe courtesy of Selina Periampillai, founder of Taste Mauritius [tastemauritius.com](http://tastemauritius.com)*

## Britain

### CLASSIC ROAST TURKEY DINNER

Serves 6

#### INGREDIENTS

For the turkey:

- » 6oz salted butter, softened
- » 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- » 1 x 3kg Bronze turkey crown, wishbone removed
- » 175ml dry white wine

For the potatoes:

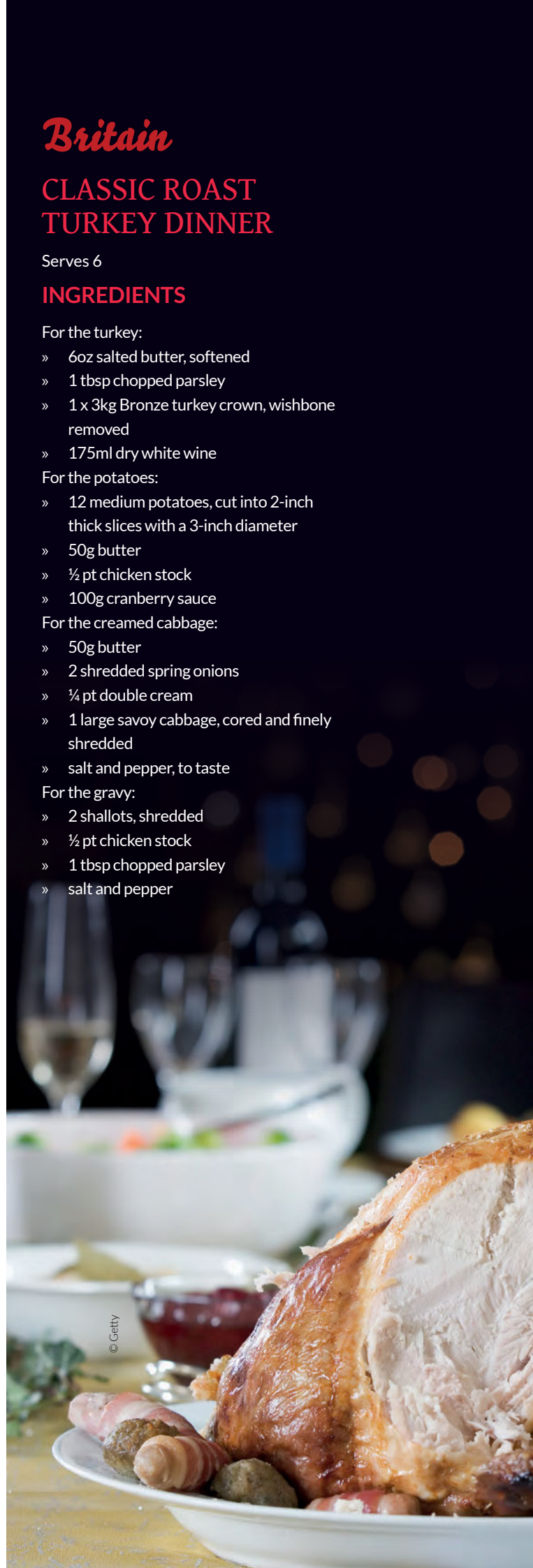
- » 12 medium potatoes, cut into 2-inch thick slices with a 3-inch diameter
- » 50g butter
- » ½ pt chicken stock
- » 100g cranberry sauce

For the creamed cabbage:

- » 50g butter
- » 2 shredded spring onions
- » ¼ pt double cream
- » 1 large savoy cabbage, cored and finely shredded
- » salt and pepper, to taste

For the gravy:

- » 2 shallots, shredded
- » ½ pt chicken stock
- » 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- » salt and pepper





## METHOD

Preheat oven to 200C.

Mix half of the butter with the chopped parsley.

Carefully release the skin of the turkey and smear the butter mix on the breast underneath, then smooth the skin back to its original shape and smear the rest of the butter on the skin.

Season and put into the oven for 1 hour, basting regularly. Then add the wine to the roasting tray, reduce the oven temperature to 180C, and cook until the turkey's juices run clear. Remove the turkey from the oven, leaving it on at 180C, and rest the meat for 30 minutes in the tin.

Meanwhile, take the potato slices and remove the centres with a melon baller. Melt the butter in an oven-safe pan, and fry the potato pieces until the cut sides are golden-brown. Turn over and carefully pour in the stock to come halfway up the potatoes.

Roast in the oven, brushing regularly with melted butter. When cooked, remove from the oven and take out of the tin (reserving the stock for the gravy). Fill the potatoes with the cranberry sauce, and keep warm.

Meanwhile, for the cabbage, melt the butter and sweat the spring onions without allowing to colour. Add the cream, and bring to the boil.

Plunge the shredded cabbage into boiling salted water for 2 minutes, drain, and add to the cream mixture. Cook gently for 5 minutes until soft, then season and set aside.

For the gravy, remove the turkey from the roasting tin to a serving platter, then set the roasting tin over a medium-high hob. Add the shallots, and allow to colour. Add the chicken stock and bring to the boil, then add the reserved potato stock and reduce the gravy to half its volume.

Strain into a clean saucepan and bring back to the boil, add parsley, and season to taste.

Serve up the turkey with the cranberry sauce-stuffed potatoes, cabbage, and gravy.

*Recipe courtesy of chef Brian Turner*



## Lebanon

### SAYADIAH - FRIED SEA BASS WITH TAHINI AND RICE

*This is a popular festive seafood dish in the Lebanon, often served on high days and holidays, and a good one for serving to large groups as you can scale up the number of fish fillets and rice as necessary.*

Serves 4

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 3 tbsp tahini
- » 100g plain yoghurt
- » squeeze of lemon juice
- » salt and freshly-ground black pepper
- » 500ml hot chicken stock
- » 250g Basmati rice
- » 250ml vegetable oil
- » 25g pine nuts
- » 2-3 tbsp plain flour
- » 1 large onion, sliced
- » 1 tbsp olive oil
- » ½ tsp ground cumin
- » 8 sea bass fillets, cut in half crossways
- » flat-leaf parsley leaves, to garnish
- » lemon wedges, to serve

#### METHOD

Stir together the tahini and yogurt in a bowl. Season with the lemon juice and salt and black pepper to taste. Set aside.

Put the chicken stock in a small pan and bring to the boil. Add the rice and simmer on the lowest setting according to the timings on the packet.

Heat about 1 tablespoon of the oil in a saucepan and fry the pine nuts until golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. Put the remaining vegetable oil into the pan and heat until a splash of water added to it sizzles.



Put the flour on to a plate and season well with salt and pepper. Toss the onion in it, then drop the coated onion gently into the hot oil (reserving the remaining flour on the plate) and fry until golden. Lift out with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper, then season again with a pinch of salt.

Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the cumin to the remaining flour on the plate, then toss the fish in it – you may need to add a little more to the plate at this stage as you don't want the cumin to overpower the delicate flavour of the fish. Fry the fish in batches, skin-side down, for a couple of minutes, then turn over and cook until just cooked through.

Fluff the rice up with a fork then spoon on to a large plate. Spoon the fish on top, then scatter over the onion and pine nuts. Drizzle with a little of the tahini sauce and serve the remainder in a bowl alongside. Garnish the dish with the parsley leaves and serve immediately with lemon wedges.

*Recipe courtesy of Tony Kitous, owner of Comptoir Libanais [lecomptoir.co.uk](http://lecomptoir.co.uk)*



## Sicily

### TIMBALLO DI MACCHERONI - BAKED PASTA WITH AUBERGINE

*Timballo di maccheroni is a popular dish at Christmas because it is so easy to prepare in advance. Many families will prepare one first thing Christmas Day morning and then leave it to roast while they are at church. It is the perfect dish for sharing given its cake-like shape – everyone grabs a slice.*

Serves 4–6

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 3 aubergines, preferably the round, pale violet ones
- » sea salt
- » 2 tbsp unsalted butter for greasing
- » 5 tbsp breadcrumbs
- » olive oil
- » 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- » 1 garlic clove, crushed
- » 1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- » 400g rigatoni or penne rigate
- » 60g caciocavallo or pecorino cheese, sliced

#### METHOD

Cut the aubergines into thin slices, sprinkle with salt and leave to drain in a colander for at least 2 hours. Squeeze lightly to get rid of the excess liquid.

Preheat the oven to 180C/gas mark 4. Grease a round cake tin size roughly (25cm diameter approx) or tart tin, about 3-4cm deep, then put in 2 tbsp of breadcrumbs and shake and turn the dish so that the breadcrumbs cling to the butter and line the dish.

Heat about 6mm of olive oil in a deep frying pan and sauté the aubergine slices in batches until lightly coloured. Lift out and drain on kitchen paper, then, using about three-quarters of the aubergines, overlap the slices over the base and around the sides of the greased and breadcrumb tin.

In a pan, heat a tablespoon of olive oil, put in the onion and garlic and cook until soft but not coloured. Add the chopped tomatoes and season with salt; cover with a lid, and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes.



Bring a pan of water to the boil, add salt, then put in the pasta and cook for about 3 minutes less than the time given on the packet, so that it is al dente. Drain, reserving some of the cooking water.

Spoon a layer of pasta into the aubergine-lined tin, followed by some of the tomato sauce, a layer of the remaining aubergine and a layer of grated cheese. Repeat, finishing with a layer of aubergine, followed by the rest of the breadcrumbs. Bake in the preheated oven for about 25 minutes, until golden.

Leave to stand for about 10 minutes to firm up, then put a plate over the top of the tin, hold both the plate and the tin firmly, and turn both over together, so that the timballo turns out on to the plate. Serve cut in wedges.

*Recipe extracted from Giorgio Locatelli's 'Made in Sicily', published by 4th Estate*

## BEN TISH'S

### cracking tapas menu

*Recipes and images courtesy of Ben Tish, who is currently working with specialist ingredients company gresado.com – from where you can purchase ingredients market with a 'B'*



### EMPANADILLA MINCE PIES

#### INGREDIENTS

For the filling (make at least 3 days - and up to 1 month - in advance):

- » 400ml dark brandy
- » 600ml PX sherry
- » 700g currants
- » 800g sultanas
- » 700g muscatel raisins
- » 4 quince, peeled, cored and chopped fairly small
- » 570g pork fat or suet
- » 100g pine nuts\*, toasted and coarsely chopped

- » 600g demerara sugar
- » 300g dark muscovado sugar
- » 2 rounded tsp ground cinnamon\*
- » 4 rounded tsp ground mixed spice\*
- » 8 clementines, zest only
- » 500g whole mixed peel, diced small

For the empanadillas:

- » 500g all-butter puff pastry
- » 1 egg, beaten

#### METHOD

For the filling, place the alcohols in a pan set over medium heat and reduce to half the original volume. Add all the other filling ingredients, remove from heat, and leave to steep for at least 3 days or, better, up to 1 month in the fridge.

For the empanadillas, preheat the oven to 180C. Roll the pastry to ½ cm thick, and cut out 12cm disks. Place a tablespoonful of the mixture in the middle of each disk, fold over into 'half moons', and seal by crimping the edge with a fork.

Place the pies on a non-stick baking tray, brush with egg wash, and bake for 25 minutes until deep golden-brown.



## ROASTED GOOSE BREAST WITH FIGS, RAISINS AND WINTER GREENS

*A spin on a festive classic with the mulled flavours of figs and raisins adding depth to the stock based sauce. Ask your butcher to take the breasts from the goose and use the legs later on.*

**Serves 4 as a tapa (or double quantities to serve as a main course)**

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 goose breast, trimmed
- » 2 figs
- » 70g raisins, soaked in warm water
- » extra virgin olive oil
- » pinch of ground cinnamon\*
- » 10g sugar
- » 500ml dark chicken stock
- » 300g winter greens (e.g. cavolo nero, turnip tops or savoy cabbage)
- » sea salt and pepper

### METHOD

Score the skin of the goose breast with a sharp knife. Place the figs and drained raisins in a saucepan with a splash of olive oil, and set over a medium heat. Roast gently and then add the cinnamon and sugar and continue to caramelise for 2 minutes. Pour over the chicken stock, bring to the boil, and then simmer until reduced by half. Turn off the heat and reserve until required.

Season the goose breast well, and place skin side down in a cold sauté pan. Set over a low heat and render the fat from the breast, pouring off at regular intervals. The time for this process depends on the fattiness of the goose.

When ready the skin should be golden brown and crispy with minimal layer of fat. After this flip over the goose and continue to cook on the flesh for 4-5 minutes, or until medium-rare. Remove from the pan and rest in a warm area.

Prepare the winter greens and blanch them in boiling salted water until tender, then refresh them in iced water and squeeze out well. Remove the figs from the stock, cut each into 6, and put back in the pan along with the greens. Season well and bring back to the boil.

Check the seasoning and then divide between 4 warm plates. To serve, slice the goose into 12 pieces and place on top of the greens.



## BRAISED SPICED VENISON EMPANADAS WITH PARSNIP PURÉE

**Serves 4 as a tapa (or double quantities to serve as a main course)**

### INGREDIENTS

For the filling:

- » olive oil
- » 200g venison haunch, trimmed
- » 1 stick celery, diced
- » 1 carrot, diced
- » 1 shallot, diced
- » 1 glass red wine
- » 1.5l dark chicken stock
- » 1 bay leaf
- » 1 clove
- » 1 strip of orange zest
- » 3 peppercorns

### METHOD

For the filling, preheat the oven to 140C.

Place an ovenproof dish over a high heat, add a glug of oil, and sear the venison on all sides.

Add the vegetables and colour them well. Pour in the wine, reduce until nearly evaporated, and then pour in the stock along with all the aromatics.

Bring to the boil, skim well and then transfer to the oven. Cook for approximately 2 hours, or until the venison is tender, then remove from the oven and transfer the meat to a bowl.

Pass the stock through a fine-meshed sieve, and reduce to a sticky consistency in a saucepan set over a high heat.

Flake the meat and mix into the reduced stock. Season well, and leave to cool.

For the empanadas, roll out the pastry to 1cm thickness and cut out four 15cm disks. Leave to chill in the

- » 2 juniper berries
- » ½ a cinnamon stick
- » sea salt and black pepper

For the empanadas:

- » 150g home-made or bought puff pastry

- » 1 egg, beaten, to glaze

For the parsnip purée:

- » 2 medium parsnips, peeled and diced
- » milk, to cover
- » sea salt and pepper

refrigerator for a few minutes.

Lay out the pastry disks and divide the cooled meat mixture between them, ensuring there is enough space to fold the pastry over to create a half moon shape.

Brush the edges of half the disk with beaten egg (reserving the remainder), then fold over and seal. Crimp with a fork and then transfer to a fridge to cool for at least 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 180C. While it heats, cook the parsnips in the milk until tender, transfer to a blender and puree until smooth. Season well and keep hot until required.

Transfer the chilled empanadas onto a baking tray, brush with egg, and bake for 15 minutes, or until the pastry is golden-brown and the meat inside is piping hot.

Serve immediately, plated with the reserved parsnip purée.



# Leftovers:

What to do with the remains  
of Christmas Day



## ROSA'S THAI CAFÉ ROAST TURKEY RED CURRY

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 2 tbsp red curry paste
- » 450ml coconut milk
- » 500g roast turkey, shredded
- » 2 tbsp fish sauce (or ½ tsp salt)
- » 1 tbsp palm sugar
- » 200g pineapple, chopped, juices retained
- » 100g French beans
- » 100g mix of green and red pepper, chopped
- » 5 kaffir lime leaves, chopped
- » 5-6 Thai basil leaves, to garnish

### METHOD

Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan set over a high heat. Add the red curry paste and fry for 20 seconds.

Add 250ml of the coconut milk, and stir constantly until the oil rises to the top. Add the turkey and continue to stir.

Add the rest of the coconut milk, the fish sauce, the palm sugar, and the pineapple and its juices, and cook for 5 minutes.

Add the French beans, green and red pepper and cook through. Add the kaffir lime and basil leaves, cover the pan, and cook for 2 minutes.

Remove from the heat, and serve immediately with rice.

*Recipe courtesy of Rosa's Thai Café  
rosasthaicafe.com*



## VIVEK SINGH'S SOUTH INDIAN-STYLE TURKEY STIR-FRY

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| For the spice mix:                                | » 2 tbsp vegetable or corn oil                    |
| » 2 whole dried red chillies                      | » 1-inch piece fresh ginger, cut into thin strips |
| » ½ tsp coriander seeds                           | » 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped                 |
| » ½ tsp turmeric powder                           | » 2 green chillies, cut lengthwise into halves    |
| » 1 tbsp fennel seeds                             | » 10 fresh curry leaves                           |
| » ½ tsp cumin seeds                               | » 2 red onions, cut into thick slices             |
| » ½ tsp black peppercorns                         | » ½ tsp salt                                      |
| » 2-inch piece of cinnamon stick                  | » 2 tbsp grated coconut                           |
| » 3 cloves  | » 3 tbsp coconut milk                             |
| » 2 green cardamom pods                           | » ½ tsp sugar                                     |
| For the stir-fry:                                 | » 1 tbsp chopped fresh coriander leaves           |
| » approx 500g trimmings or leftover cooked turkey | » ½ lime, juice only                              |

### METHOD

For the spice mix, roast all the spices in a pan and grind them to a coarse powder using a food processor or a mortar and pestle.

For the stir-fry, shred the trimmings or leftovers into ½ cm thick slices and keep aside.

Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the ginger, garlic, green chillies, curry leaves and onions and sauté those for a minute until the onions are coloured but still crunchy. Sprinkle in the salt, grated coconut, and the ground spice mix, and stir for another minute.

Now add the sliced meat back to the pan, and mix in. Reduce the heat, stir in the coconut milk, followed by the sugar (which will balance the dish), and mix well until the liquid dries up and the meat pieces are evenly coated with the spices. Sprinkle with coriander leaves, squeeze in the lime juice, and serve hot with bread like naan or paratha.

*Recipe courtesy of Vivek Singh*



## CHESTNUT TAGLIATELLE WITH TURKEY RAGÙ

*Bocca di Lupo's chef-patron Jacob Kenedy says: 'I first made this recipe because, well, there's a whole lot of leg and bone on a turkey that normally doesn't get eaten. I offer two methods here – dismembering the turkey raw, and serving it as a starter before your roast; or using the carcass from your roast, and serving this hearty pasta dish in the days after Christmas.'*

**Serves 4-5 as a main; 8 as a starter**

### INGREDIENTS

For the sauce:

- » a turkey – either raw, whole; or roast; breasts removed and previously eaten
- » 2 onions
- » 2 carrots
- » 4 sticks celery
- » 4 cloves garlic
- » 6 tbsp olive oil
- » 300ml dry Marsala, white wine, or dry medium sherry
- » 4 bay leaves
- » small bunch parsley, leaves and stalks separated
- » 1 tbsp whole fennel seeds
- » 1 tbsp whole black peppercorns
- » 100g pancetta, diced
- » 15 sage leaves, chopped
- » 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- » ½ tsp grated nutmeg
- » 1 pint whole milk
- » 800g (2 tins) chopped tomatoes, or whole ones broken up by hand

For the pasta (or use 60g dried tagliatelle per person as a starter, 120g per person as a main):

- » 150g chestnut flour
- » 300g '00' (or plain) flour, plus extra for rolling
- » 5 large or 6 medium eggs

To serve:

- » 100g grated parmesan



### METHOD

To make the sauce: If your turkey is raw: separate the legs from the body. Use a sharp knife to cut through the ribs, and to sever the wings from their joint to the spine (cut below the wing if you want it on your roast; above the wing if you want it in your stock). You'll be left with a crown roast (reserve it for another purpose), 2 legs and the gnarly bit of the carcass. Roast these in a fairly hot oven (200C fan/220 static) for 90 minutes until a rich chestnut brown, then take out to cool. Separate the leg meat (along with the skin) from the bone.

If your turkey is roast, cold and eaten, pick all the meat and skin from the carcass – you'll get most from the legs and wings. Roast the bones again in a fairly hot oven (200C fan/220 static) for an hour or until deep gold.

In either case, make a stock (if you've time – if you're lazy, rushed or pragmatic just throw the bones out and buy a litre of chicken stock, and boozyify it with wine or marsala): take 1 onion, 1 carrot, 2 sticks celery and 2 cloves garlic and chop them very roughly. Brown them in half the oil at high heat. Add the bones, the wine, 2 bay leaves, the parsley stalks, fennel seeds and peppercorns and add enough water to just cover. Simmer for 2-3 hours, or until halved in volume. Strain it, discard the solids, skim the fat from the liquid & discard it, leaving a lean, rich stock.

Now, finally, make the sauce – start by making a soffritto. Fry the pancetta in the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil over a high heat until browned. Chop 1 onion, 1 carrot, 2 sticks celery and 2 cloves garlic finely and add them to the pan along with a good pinch

of salt. Reduce the heat to medium and stir until well softened and somewhat amber – about 15 minutes. Chop the turkey meat and skin and add it to the soffritto, along with the chopped sage, remaining 2 bay leaves, ground cinnamon and nutmeg. Cook for a further 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally until it all looks rather unctuous. Add the milk, tomatoes and stock, season with a good amount of pepper and a safe amount of salt and simmer, uncovered (on the stove or in a 160C oven), for 2-3 hours until thick, the fat rising to the top. Taste for seasoning, add the chopped parsley leaves and it's ready. You can use it straight away, chill it for up to 3 days, or freeze it for longer storage.

To make the pasta, bring together the two flours with the eggs to make a soft dough, then knead for a good ten minutes. Roll it out 1.5mm thick (like a two pence piece), then lay it out to partially dry for about 20 minutes. Cut it into tagliatelle – even strips, about 15mm wide.

When you're ready to eat, get a big pan of well-salted water (10g/litre) to a rolling boil, and in a separate, wide pan bring the ragù to a simmer (if cooking for less, allow 70g ragù per person as a starter, 140g as a main). Boil the pasta until slightly more al dente than you like to serve it, drain it (reserving a little water), and add it to the ragù. Cook together for a minute or so, adding splashes of pasta water if it looks too dry, until the pasta is coated in the sauce.

Serve with the parmesan sprinkled on top.

*Recipe courtesy of Jacob Kenedy, chef-patron at Bocca di Lupo [boccadilupo.com](http://boccadilupo.com)*





# 12 days of Christmas

A DOZEN DECADENT CHOCOLATE LOGS

*Zoe Perrett digs in and discovers a dozen chocolate  
bûches de Noël designed by Britain's premier pastry chefs*



# Imagine

spending the day in an enchanted forest surrounded by freshly-felled logs. You trip, you slip, and you fear your face will never be the same as you hurtle headfirst towards the timber...

Only to find that each tree trunk is made not from wood but is entirely edible; the full dozen hewn by the hands of some of the country's premier pastry chefs. It's fair to say that the anecdote is embellished, but not so well as the *bûches de Noël* that were showcased at The Shard earlier this year.

The project is a pioneering one from French luxury chocolate makers Valrhona, whose aim is to put in the frame some of the talented individuals whose work goes largely unacknowledged. This is not because the elite establishments they work within are not worthy of attention – merely because they're just too busy beaver away on their latest creations to court publicity.

So, to showcase their skills to a wider audience, Valrhona challenged a dozen of the country's best pastry chefs to design a chocolate-based *bûche*. In the run up to Christmas, small numbers of all twelve creations will be available to purchase for home consumption; ideal for anyone looking to make their guests' jaws drop. And drop they will – each of these desserts deserves at least a moment of stunned silence.

With twelve *bûches* on offer, you could ostensibly order one for each and every day of the traditional Christmas period, but the very limited run of each piece means you'd need both speed and luck in your favour. But fear not; even savoured singularly, any of these confections would sit pretty on the most decadent of dining tables.

## *Why a chocolate log at Christmas?*

The *bûche de Noël* we know so well as a 'Yule log' represents that which it so clearly depicts; referencing what fuelled the family fire at Christmastime. What was lugged onto the pyre was no ordinary log; rather, one decorated with pinecones and the leaves of holly and ivy – and its supposedly auspicious ashes were gathered to ensure forthcoming good fortune.

## *Looks good - tastes good...*

The need to feature chocolate as a key component may sound like it could restrict a recipe, but with Valrhona's extensive range of expressions on each artist's palette, that couldn't be further from the truth. Personal palates and diverse backgrounds made for a beautifully-diverse range of *bûches*.

Interpretations of a seemingly-simple theme were also broad when it came to execution. From modern reworkings of classic Christmas desserts to something totally tropical, yet topical in hue – the latter evidenced in a coconut, mango, passionfruit creation from Lewis Wilson of The Ritz that could be called 'the very definition of 'white Christmas'', were it not called 'Putting on The Ritz'.

Elsewhere amongst the twelve, you'll find Sarah Barber of ME London putting heavy emphasis on Valrhona textures and types with her Black Forest *Bûche*; playing off a rough Manjari layer against a silk-smooth Opalys mousse.

Luke Frost chose to name his *bûche* 'Berkshire Belvedere Forest' after the home of his restaurant, Coworth Park – using British damsons and sarsaparilla alongside creamy Bahibe milk chocolate; infusing a vanilla cream with the caramel notes of Dulcey.

A completely non-traditional take is offered by Nicholas Patterson. As pastry chef at Shangri La at The Shard, it was to be expected his *bûche* would have an Asian persuasion. The *Rôu Nèn* includes citrus fruits many may never have heard of; yuzu and buddha's hand, paired with the tropical tastes of mango, sesame, and coconut – brilliantly-balanced with Valrhona's Ivoire chocolate.

The smoked pecan praline in Joseph Wagenaar's Bahibe Banoffee *Bûche* adds a curiously alluring element to a classic British dessert, whilst The Langham's Cherish Finden references the red velvet cake that's taken the world by storm in her arresting 'Magic By Moonlight', which effectively marries Valrhona's Caramelia and Kalinko within its spiralling structure.

There are far more clever flavours to savour within the lengthy list of logs. A small snapshot? Lemon and gianduja; Poire William and caramelised white chocolate; Jivara, chestnut and citrus; and a thought-provoking peanut, spiced biscuit, pear and Guanaja mousse assemblage from The Berkeley's Mourad Khat.

## *Securing a showstopper*

Each *bûche de Noël* will be available to order from the participating venue, and in some cases, will also be served on site. For all information and details, see [valrhona.com](http://valrhona.com)



1.



5.



2.



6.



3.



7.



4.



8.



### The chefs behind the bûches

1. Andrew Blas Café Royal [hotelcaferoyal.com](http://hotelcaferoyal.com)
2. Luke Frost Coworth Park [dorchestercollection.com](http://dorchestercollection.com)
3. Sarah Barber ME London [melia.com](http://melia.com)
4. Eric Rousseau Pâtisserie Belle Epoque [belleepoque.co.uk](http://belleepoque.co.uk)
5. John Grantham Sixtyone Restaurant [sixtyonerestaurant.co.uk](http://sixtyonerestaurant.co.uk)
6. Joseph Wagenaar The Andaz [andaz.hyatt.com](http://andaz.hyatt.com)
7. Mourad Khat The Berkeley [the-berkeley.co.uk](http://the-berkeley.co.uk)
8. Régis Negrier The Delaunay [thedelaunay.com](http://thedelaunay.com)
9. Loïc Carbonnet The Four Seasons [fourseasons.com](http://fourseasons.com)
10. Nicholas Patterson Shangri-La at The Shard [shangri-la.com](http://shangri-la.com)
11. Lewis Wilson The Ritz [theritzlondon.com](http://theritzlondon.com)
12. Cherish Finden The Langham [london.langhamhotels.co.uk](http://london.langhamhotels.co.uk)



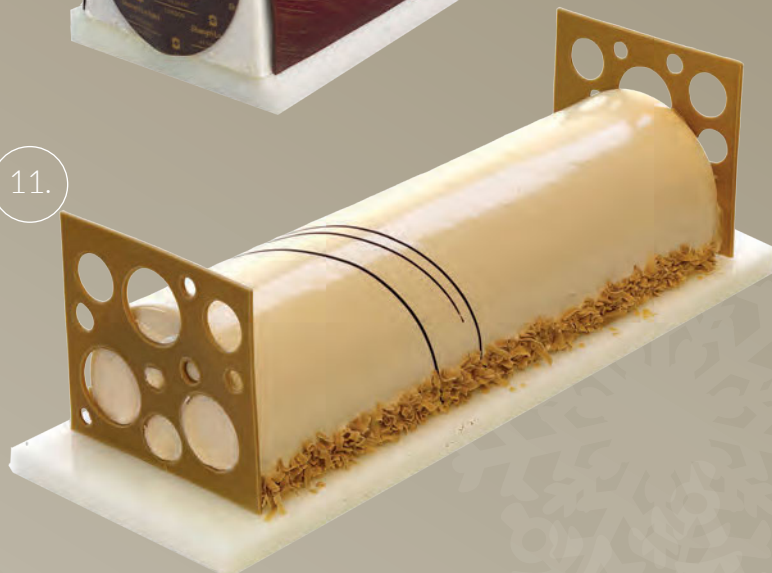
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10.



11.



## Creating a DIY bûche de Noël

Chef Sven-Hanson Britt shares his top tips

The Valrhona challenge is an excellent showcase of the skills of Britain's chocolatiers and pastry chefs. But when it comes to home cooking, to my mind, a Yule log has always been - and must always be - a terribly sweet, over-indulgent milk chocolate affair: an exuberant example of the attitude everyone should have at Christmas.

Here are my top tips for kitchen success...

- Go for flavours that you know everyone likes. Think chocolate, Black Forest, nuts - classic combinations.
- Don't be afraid of pastry. It's really not that hard once you understand what's going on.
- Swapping Swiss-roll style for layers of sponge means you're not limited to one flavour and you'll also minimise the risk of unsightly cracks.
- A palette knife is your new best friend! Masking the sides of a Yule log can be tricky, so get in some practise with your palette knife for a professional finish.
- Decoration and a keen eye for detail is the key to pastry perfection. Whether it is icing sugar snow or a marzipan farmyard, the finishing touches make all the difference.
- Use chocolate that's fairly-traded - Valrhona is one such example.
- Keep it simple, and just concentrate on cooking something delicious.

12.



The Langham's Cherish Finden references the red velvet cake that's taken the world by storm in her arresting 'Magic By Moonlight', which effectively marries Valrhona's Caramelia and Kalingo within its spiralling structure.



## SVEN-HANSON BRITT'S YULE LOG

*This almost-foolproof chocolate-y, nutty Yule log has layers of soft sponge and crunchy Nutella cornflakes. Be patient and accurate with the stacking and decoration, and you will end up with a stunner.*

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

For the chocolate sponge:

- » 2 egg yolks
- » 270g sunflower oil
- » 560g sugar
- » 270g water
- » 400g plain flour
- » 105g cocoa powder
- » 10g bicarbonate of soda
- » 4 whole medium eggs
- » 200ml Tia Maria, Kahlua, or dark rum

For the crunchy filling:

- » 250g chocolate with 60% cocoa solids, chopped

- » 150g Nutella
- » 250g cornflakes

For the ganache coating:

- » 360ml double cream
- » 500g chocolate with 60% cocoa solids, chopped
- » 40g butter, cut into cubes

For the vanilla filling:

- » 250g mascarpone
- » seeds from 1 vanilla pod
- » 50g caster sugar

For the decoration:

- » 10 hazelnuts, toasted and grated



### METHOD

For the sponge, preheat the oven to 170C.

Make a 'mayonnaise' with the egg yolks and oil by gradually adding the oil to the yolks and whisking continuously until all is combined. Set aside.

Bring the sugar and water to the boil in a pan.

Combine all of the dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl, and pour in the boiling syrup. Mix together, then add the mayonnaise and stir well.

Beat in the whole eggs and the alcohol, then spread the batter over a large, flat baking tray lined with non-stick baking parchment to a depth of 2 ½ cm; using a palette knife to ensure it is flat.

Bake for 15-20 minutes until cooked. Whilst it is warm, remove the sponge from the tray and peel off the baking parchment.

While the sponge cools, make the crunchy cornflake filling. Melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water, then mix in the Nutella and stir until smooth.

Mix in the cornflakes, then place this mixture between two sheets of silicon paper and roll out with a rolling pin to an even depth of 1 cm thick and the same shape as the sponge.

Freeze this rectangle on a flat tray for 15 minutes until firm, then peel off the paper and lay the frozen crunchy layer on top of the sponge. Pop in the fridge to stay cool.

For the ganache, bring the cream to the boil and pour over the chocolate and butter, mixing with a wooden spoon until everything is super-smooth and shiny. Set this aside to cool a little until it firms up to the perfect spreading consistency.

For the vanilla cream, mix together the mascarpone, vanilla seeds and sugar. Spread this in an even layer on top of the sponge and cornflake mix.

To assemble, cut the layered sponge into 5 strips – two that are 3 inches wide, two that are 2 inches wide, and one that is 1 inch wide.

Stack the strips on your serving board or plate, starting with the widest and finishing with the narrowest.

When the ganache has firmed a little, spread all over the log with a palette knife, using a fork to attempt a wood effect if desired.

Decorate with a scattering of the grated hazelnuts.

Leave to firm up for an hour or two before cutting. And remember, portion generously: that's what Christmas is about, after all!

*Recipe courtesy of chef Sven-Hanson Britt*





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*Coming  
in 2015*



## ANJULA DEVI: LIFE, TIMES & TASTE

# A childhood filled with food and family

Over the next few editions of Good Things, Anjula Devi, founder of the Anjula Devi cooking school in West London, will exclusively share her life story through food with us – and you

IMAGES: ANJULA DEVI

*At Good Things, our key aim is to work with renowned food experts in order to bring you compelling, inspiring stories and superlative recipes from diverse cultures and traditions. So when we heard Anjula Devi's tale and sampled her delicious authentic Indian food, we knew we needed her as Associate Editor.*

*In this special festive edition, Anjula starts her story at the very beginning, and shares with us her memories from early childhood. Read on to discover how food has proved an inspiration and a passion throughout her life...*

The first cooking skills I mastered as a very little girl were the making of pakoras and a fresh zesty chutney. The pakoras that my father taught me to



Anjula and her husband Andy



make are very special, and the recipe in this edition is the first time I have ever shared it in full. The way that I make them, pakoras are light and crunchy and bursting with flavours.

I recently delivered a series of demonstrations at the BBC Good Food Show, which included sharing some of my secrets for making pakoras, one of India's favourite street foods. I believe that the secret of a good demonstration is to enable people to go home and replicate what they have just been shown. Even if you're inexperienced, I would strongly encourage you to follow the recipe in this edition. I promise you won't be disappointed. Indian street foods are always close to my heart; the kind of food that appears humble, yet can be made to taste amazing.



My earliest memories are full of food, which for me was a huge part of family life as I grew up. With a large family to bring up, my parents didn't have a lot of money, but we always ate great Indian food.

Our back garden was full of incredible home-grown produce. I can easily recollect images in our garden of the marrows, beetroot, potatoes, carrots, radishes and onions, as well as the coriander and mint that we used to grow. Knowing that we had grown it ourselves, everything seemed to taste far better. Today, I still feel strongly that one of the most important things about cooking is having the confidence that comes with knowing exactly what has gone into each dish!

If we went for a family day at the seaside or to the funfair, we always took our own food, which was a very natural thing to do at that time. As a little girl, making a trip to India, I remember that we took our own food on the plane. Lots of bags packed with amazing Indian street food – I vividly remember pakoras (of course), achaar and paratha.

*'Sharing food is my culture,  
and I still try to uphold those  
warm and welcoming traditions.  
Great food is a wonderful way of  
bringing people together'*

Every day, before going to school, I used to love having a cup of 'cha', as Dad used to call it, and an incredible 'sugar paratha' (sometimes called 'chini ka paratha'); or plain paratha with achaar. As a five year-old, some of the other children were reluctant to sit next to me at school as I 'smelled of curry'. But today I am able to laugh fondly thinking of the irony, given that people these days always comment that they love the smell of my food.

When we had guests coming to the house, Dad insisted that they could only leave after they had been given a cup of tea and a snack; very often pakoras. That is my culture, and I still try to uphold those warm and welcoming traditions, with food being a vital part of our life with family and friends. Great food is a wonderful way of bringing people together.

My Dad was simply an inspiration, and the biggest influence on my life. He taught me to make pakoras and chutney when I was very young. These were my first steps on the road to a life full of loving food. In the next edition, I will tell you more about my Dad, and the dishes that we went on to create together.

*To find out more about Anjula, visit [anjuladevi.com](http://anjuladevi.com)*



**NB**  
no water is added to  
create these pakoras,  
only the water naturally  
drawn from all of the  
fresh ingredients.

## ANJULA'S PERFECT PAKORAS

*Crispy and golden pakora teamed up with hot 'masala cha' is a great combination. Enjoy the mouth-watering pakora along with your family or friends. The taste and aroma of the pakora will make your get-together a memorable occasion.*

Serves 4-6

### INGREDIENTS

- |   |   |                                       |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| » 3 large potatoes,<br>thinly sliced (King<br>Edwards are my<br>favourites) | » 1 bunch fresh<br>fenugreek, chopped             | » ½ - 1 tsp red chilli<br>powder      |
| » 2 large onions,<br>finely sliced  | » salt  | » 1 tsp garam masala                  |
| » 2 bags baby spinach   | » ½ tsp cumin seeds                               | » 100- 150g besan<br>(chickpea flour) |
| » 1 large bunch<br>coriander, chopped                                       | » ½ tsp ajwain/carom<br>seeds                     | » vegetable oil, to<br>deep-fry       |
|   | » 1 tsp anardana<br>(dried pomegranate<br>powder) |                                       |

### METHOD

Place the sliced potatoes and onions in a large mixing bowl and add the baby spinach, chopped coriander, and fenugreek. Sprinkle salt over, and leave in the fridge overnight. (I place a small side plate on top of the ingredients in the mixing bowl with a heavy object on top of the plate to help draw the water from the fresh ingredients. My heavy object is my pestle and mortar!)

Remove from the fridge and you will find that the salt (and your weighted object) has drawn all the water out of the mixture.

Add cumin, ajwain, anardana, red chilli powder, and garam masala, and stir. Then gradually add chickpea flour until the mixture is the consistency of pancake batter.

Pour vegetable oil into a wok or deep pan. Let the oil heat for a while, and when you feel the oil is hot enough, carefully place spoonfuls of the mixture into the oil.

Once the potato slices are golden in colour, take the pakoras out of the oil, and put them on some kitchen paper to absorb any excess oil.

Serve, with 'masala cha' (spiced tea) and mint and coriander chutney.



# VINTAGE IN GOOD WOOD

*Douglas Blyde meets the men rolling  
out the barrels to raise spirits*

560ml Crown Royal  
175ml Cinzano Rosso  
175ml Cinzano Dry

OUT:

BEER  
BAR





Despite 'Cooper' being the 32nd most popular surname in the UK, and the expanse of the emblematic oak tree tugging at the damp, earthen floors of the countryside, our island boasts remarkably few barrel-makers today. However, a new generation of barkeeps are backing a trend which could see resurgence in the art of seasoning, then scorching and steaming staves from our shores into the familiar rotund shape of the cask.

I spoke to a glinting and often meticulously-bearded back bar of talents about their enthusiasm for resting cocktails in wood, beginning with Nikhil Merchant. The India-based 'curate' of food and bar menus, food writer, and blogger at [nonchalantgourmand.com](http://nonchalantgourmand.com), believes the modern movement dates from the turn of the century. 'Tony Conigliaro of Islington's 69 Colebrook Row was one of the first to rediscover ageing cocktails when he began resting drinks for varying periods of time to observe flavour development,' he says. 'Conigliaro concluded bottle-ageing can have a significant effect on the taste of the cocktail.' Inspired by Conigliaro's patient exertions in his spirits lab, Merchant says Oregon-based bar writer Jeffrey Morgenthaler busied himself experimenting with putting liquor-forward cocktails, such as the Negroni, into small barrels in his bar at the Clyde Common. 'The results were so spectacular that the drinks immediately went onto the menu, where they remain.'

Pritesh Mody, who established specialist ingredient emporium World of Zing in East London, where he crafts high-end, variously-matured cocktails to vend online, told me he traced the trend of withholding drinks in order to gather a patina of flavour much further. 'Ageing drinks - or at least storing pre-mixed drinks - is not new. Jerry Thomas' *Bartenders Guide* features 19th-century records of essence and punch recipes specifically for bottling.'

'As bartenders we want to create. We have since the trade started. We mix two spirits together to change the flavour, so why not modify the ingredients further still with wood?'



## Possession

I wondered if the rise of barrels on the bar could be emblematic of the desire of the bartender to take possession of their spirits. Unlike a sommelier, whose only choices when it comes to wine concerns its service (point of time to uncork, its temperature and the style of glassware from which your lips meet the liquid) the mixing maestro has always had a more vigorous tally of options. 'Drinking is a recreational activity,' says the suave Merchant. 'It's a social, enjoyable, 'spirited' adventure. A bartender plays the role of a game-changer in what you experience at the bar and can make or break your experience.'

Max Chater, head bartender at Bump Caves in the basement of Tower Bridge's Draft House, agrees. 'As bartenders we want to create. We have since the trade started. We mix two spirits together to change the flavour, so why not modify the ingredients further still with wood? The spirits are just the base.' Benny Locke of Soho's bourbon and slider den, Spuntino, sees it as a positive afterthought, it being, he says, 'the perfect way to refine really great cocktails.'

But are there spirits which indecorously defy wood's character? Chater believes this depends on what service the initially porous barrel saw before. 'Taking a fresh French oak barrel and filling it with Madeira will add certain sweetness to the wood when using it to age a cocktail. Perhaps for a Martinez – the precursor to the Martini – it will give you a different result? Yes please!' Rather than extra flavour, Locke considers the overall semblance of balance. 'Due to its already smoky nature, mezcal or a peaty scotch might be a little too intense for a barrel.'



## Negroni

So, rather than court contrast, what is complementary? One of the most commonly wood-matured cocktails is the 95 year-old recipe for the Negroni (classically one part gin, one part red vermouth, and one part Campari). Merchant explains why the cocktail works so agreeably when tamed by wood grain. 'It bears the right amount of bitter, sweet and herbacious flavours which age well in a great barrel and in fact enhance once aged.' Your correspondent only just recalls an evening-into-morning adventure sampling from the standout quartet of versions at Mr. Fogg's bar in Mayfair. There, Filippo Previero and Danilo Tersigni have upgraded the drink, positioning barrels of recipes subtly amended to reflect the four seasons at the bar's heart.

Locke's favourite experiment thus far also happens to be a Negroni variant, Old Pal, which replaces gin with rye whiskey and sweet vermouth with dry. 'Once this mix has been aged for two months in an oak barrel, it really adds a level of depth,' he proudly attests. 'Previous to the Old Pal, I aged two batches of the Perfect Manhattan – Canadian whisky and sweet and dry vermouth. We aged

the first batch for just two weeks as a little tester, and although delicious, it was too soon; too woody. We aged the second batch for two months and it was... incredible.'

But success can be very relative, says Chater. 'I have my favourites but they may not be the favourites of everyone who has tried them. I made a barrel-aged Manhattan which was all based around a particular vermouth and slight oxidization of it in the barrel. I served this with some dehydrated reindeer, which was incredible.' Chater notes that while oxidisation is ordinarily a cause for concern, if one can control the 'off' flavour associated with it, 'you are on to something.'

So how long should a libation slumber in its wooden cocoon? Mody says his first attempt at a Manhattan still needed time to 'mellow' after a fortnight. Regular tasting is therefore key to success. Chater looks at a maturation of 4-6 weeks with a pre-washed barrel. 'The problem with most barrel-ageing in bars is that the bartender doesn't fully understand what is happening within. There is a romance to 'ageing' a cocktail but it takes years of understanding and trial and error to fully appreciate what is happening 'in the wood'. The thing to realise is you may produce something that is fantastic and incredibly balanced, but reproducing it will be next to impossible.'

Controversially, Chater also admits to believing that the size of the barrel 'doesn't really matter'. Instead, 'it's all about the amount of surface area left open to oxygen – you can get some great results using wood staves or chips.' He adds, 'the slight effect and control the alcohol and wood has on vermouth oxidisation is beautiful. Essentially lignin structures in the wood help protect the wine in the vermouth from oxidation and reduction.'



## Long live maturation?

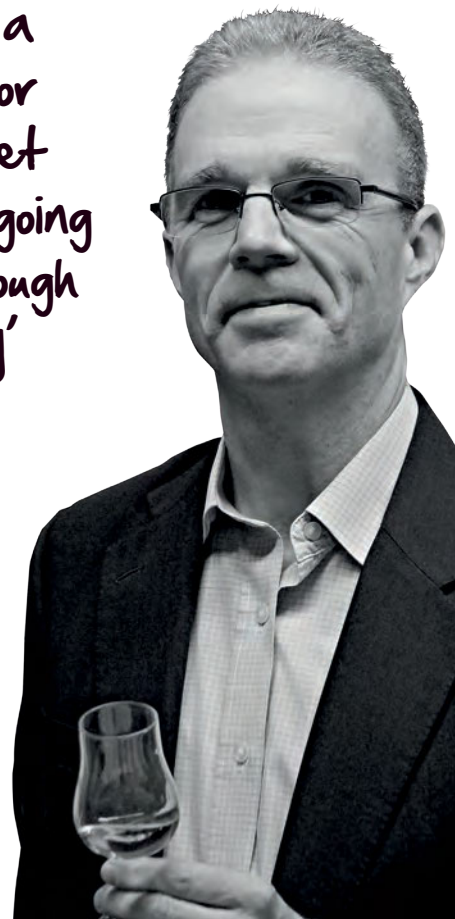
Overall, Merchant believes barrel-rested cocktails are here to stay. 'Among people who understand spirits this is an area which can see a rise in popularity. It will take its stand in the luxury sector - barrel-ageing is not cheap - and stand out as an exclusive item on bar menus.' Locke, meanwhile, notes the domino effect on the public on serving them from a small wooden cask. 'Of my customers, those who haven't ordered one have certainly left with a great deal of intrigue. You only get about 12 cocktails from one barrel, so once you tell a customer there won't be any more for another two months, they usually jump right in.' Chater concurs. 'There is a romance to the bartender aging something. Barrels add theatre and provide a good talking point.'

But what will be next in the sphere of the barrel-tinged mingle? Despite my theory that every ambitious bartender not-so-secretly dreams of being immortalised in a cocktail of their creation - a Damascus sip, if you will - there appears very little that is actually 'new' emerging from the twisted spigots of the micro wood barriques. Surely invention can come from ageing? Not according to Mody. 'Cocktails are currently going through a real purple patch, with the disco mixes seen in the '80s and '90s being replaced by a return to classic style concoctions.' But Dariush Afshar-Haghighi, head bartender of The Alchemist in the City, uses Captain Kirk-like rhetoric to acknowledge there can be another way. 'We need to keep learning new techniques - to keep evolving. Like anything worthwhile, the world of spirits and drinks is open to new ideas and to be bold in its approach. And with the nature of our concept we have an obligation to bring new methods to the table...'

**'It's brilliant fun to watch it develop in your kitchen, then rustle up a Manhattan - or bottle it and get the next load going to see you through until it's ready'**

## Take cask to task

Bruce Perry of specialist importers Eaux de Vie believes there is no better arena than your home when it comes to small-scale barrel-ageing. 'It's brilliant fun to watch it develop in your kitchen, then rustle up a Manhattan - or bottle it and get the next load going to see you through until it's ready.'



## Take them home

**World of Zing** offers subtle twists on carefully-matured classics; created by gin enthusiast, director of Fluid Movement, and co-owner of The Whistling Shop and Surf-Side, Thomas Aske. World of Zing's entrepreneur founder Pritesh Mody says, 'The subtle aromatics of stewed fruit that we take from an ex-Bordeaux cask lend itself perfectly to the bitterness and botanical nature of a Negroni.' In addition, ...Zing offers 'steel-aged' Bulleit Rye-based Manhattans 'for a more sprightly flavour delivery', while El Dorado Rum Punch is 'glass-aged' to allow oxidation 'for a smoother cocktail with properly married flavours.' Every bottle carries seductively bespoke batch and bottling dates. 'Selling them has been easier and more satisfying than I ever imagined,' reports Mody. 'Our cocktails are designed to complement an evening, priced to compete with a good bottle of wine.' [worldofzing.com](http://worldofzing.com)





## MARTINEZ

Makes enough for a 2 ½-litre barrel

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1125ml dry gin
- » 1125ml sweet vermouth
- » 180ml maraschino liqueur
- » 50ml bitters

### METHOD

Wash the barrel to infuse it with flavour - maybe try red wine or Campari.

Add all the ingredients to the pre-washed barrel, and leave for 4-6 weeks.

Strain the contents of the barrel into glass bottles.

Serve in measures of 50ml, stirring with ice to dilute.

*Recipe courtesy of Max Chater of Bump Caves [bumpcaves.co.uk](http://bumpcaves.co.uk)*

## OLD PAL

Makes enough for a 1-litre barrel

### INGREDIENTS

- » 350ml rye whiskey
- » 240ml Campari
- » 240ml dry vermouth

### METHOD

Add all ingredients to the barrel.

Leave for 2 months.

Strain into a glass bottle.

To serve, stir 60-70ml of the aged cocktail over ice, and strain into a frozen martini glass. Finish with a lemon twist.

Note: This will not fill the barrel; Benny deliberately leaves air at the top as a precaution.

*Recipe courtesy of Benny Locke of Spuntino [spuntino.co.uk](http://spuntino.co.uk)*

## Bruce's Top 10 Dly Tips

Reconsider what the barrel is for. 'I believe 'barrel-aged' is a misnomer: 'barrel-married' is better. Shake it, leap up and down, jump off a building with the shaker, but you ain't going to get a drink as homogenised as leaving it in a barrel for three weeks.'

**1** Don't add every ingredient at once. 'You don't need to age every element at the same time. Apricot liqueur, for example, can go in at the last minute, by which I mean two or three weeks down the line.'

**2** Be prepared for inevitable initial loss (the 'angel's share'). 'A new barrel is going to soak the stuff up. Of a 2 litre barrel, we lost nearly half in the first few weeks.'

**3** Form a barrel club. 'Agree on a date and share your experiments.'

**4** If at first you don't succeed... Perry's own success rate at marrying good drinks has risen to 17/20. 'But be prepared to cock it up a few times - if you're not doing that once in a while, you're not trying hard enough!'

**5** Have humility regarding what you age. When it comes to single malt Scotch for example, Perry advises, 'it's likely a distillery has already done a rather good job on ageing already - and were not planning on getting any help from you!'

**6** Consider the wood's intensity. 'The wood-to-spirit ratio in a small barrel is far beyond anything in a commercial full-sized one where it would probably take two years to get to the colour and flavor you will in a matter of few weeks.'

**7** Be cautious of fruits. 'Although an alcohol content of 62% might be strong enough to preserve them in the first place, once you've added other liquids, it will considerably lessen. And try getting the buggers out of the barrel. Plus your spigot could get blocked.'

**8** Waterproof your barrel. 'Fill it with water first of all. If it leaks that's because it's not waterproofed. So leave it on a sink board for a weekend and when it stops leaking it's now waterproofed: the wood's all swollen-up, the spigot nice and tight, and the barrel ready to use.'

**9** Finally, appreciate you're not God's gift to ageing. 'If you take the view that you're doing this for fun, then you'll have a lot of fun, otherwise you could be disappointed...'

### 10. Bruce recommends

Wasmund's 'Mature Your Own' kit which comprises a new, lightly-charred virgin white American oak barrel with two 70cl bottles of rye spirit to fill it with. 'The barrel is re-useable - look after it and you could pass it on to your grandchildren,' he says. £121 [thewhiskyexchange.com](http://thewhiskyexchange.com)



### Another option

If you feel you are ready for a barrel rather than a helpful kit, Cream Supplies offers 2, 3 and 5 litre options fashioned from new Italian oak, complete with funnel, tap and stand. From £59.99 for the 2-litre version to £71.99 for the largest size [creamsupplies.co.uk](http://creamsupplies.co.uk)





# Ultra Premium Vodka

## AWARD WINNING

\*\*\*\*Superb/Highly Recommended\*\*\*\*  
Flawless Purity, F.Paul Pacult's Spirit journal

4.5 stars, diffordsguide to Cocktails

Gold Medal, vodka category,  
San Francisco World Spirits Competition

Gold Medal, 94 points "exceptional"  
"lush and delicious", Beverage Tasting Institute

The Best Award, vodka category,  
Beverage Testing Institute

95 points Wine Enthusiast Magazine, USA

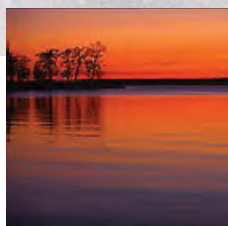
Gold Medal, Design & Packaging,  
The Spirits Business Competition

Silver Medal, package design,  
San Francisco World Spirits Competition

Silver Award, category Luxury Spirits,  
Pentawards Monaco

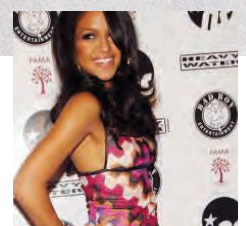
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### A Super Premium Vodka for the Celebrity in Everyone

A list Vodka for A List  
People



### Award Winning Design

Flawless Bottle Design  
with a unique Hand  
Crafted Aeration Rod to  
enhance this pure, smooth  
vodka



# GRAPE EXPECTATIONS

## OF INDIAN WINE

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Douglas Blyde uncorks distinctive ferment  
from Indian terroir...

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**DERIVED FROM ANCIENT SANSKRIT  
SYMBOLISM REPRESENTING THE NATURAL  
CYCLE, FROM CULTIVATION TO HARVEST,  
MANDALA IS A RANGE OF INDIAN-GROWN  
AND INDIAN-CRAFTED, QUALITY-INCLINED  
WINES.**

Uday Kumar represents the British chapter of Mandala's story, together with tasting-note scribe, Kiran Kumar. The former is a medical doctor and entrepreneur in charge of a network of care homes, who says he harboured 'a lifelong passion' for the fermented grape. He recalls his first taste of wine from India in the company of Mandala's Managing Director, Ramesh Rao, at the firm's 12th Main Street headquarters, Bangalore. There, it seemed the duo's personalities dovetailed instantly. 'He is an entrepreneur like me,' appraises Kumar. 'And an amazing guy who not only loves wines but is into airplanes; he got me into flying light aircraft.' It transpires Rao is also a keen sky-diver. 'But I've not done that yet!'

Kumar sensed much potential emanating from those early attempts of hearty but unrefined wines. 'It tasted different: I felt there was a lot we could do with these wines. We could also bring a lot more quality control. And re-brand it for the UK market. That was three years ago.'

One of Kumar's early challenges did not concern public perception of the wines - which were in a sense, somewhat of a blank canvas - but the removal of, to some palates at least, an undesirable aroma. 'Our winemaker, Dr. Pascal Chatonnet, a purist from Bordeaux, squeezes grapes, lets them ferment and then speak for themselves,' says Kumar. Rather than treat the almost-complete wine in tanks and barrels, Chatonnet chose to understand the nature of the 'smokiness' by looking into the vineyards and studying the soil. 'However, Dr. Chatonnet could not find a particular concrete answer.' Fortunately, Kumar found the reason while driving around the roads fringing the Nashik valley very early one morning.



'Temperatures may vary from 8-10 degrees Celsius up to 40 in the afternoon. That morning, there was a very cold, very dense fog. Through it I noticed that the farmers were lighting a lot of wood fires to warm themselves up.' The smoke, says Kumar, which contributed further to the fog, was actually sitting on the valley floor coating the epidermis of the grapes. Similar literal translation of cause and effect may also be seen in Australia where resin from eucalyptus trees so abundant they are seen as weeds weep onto vineyards - and France's Rhône, where, in a more positive context, the enticing aromas from tenacious wild herbs buffet grapes on the cusp of boisterous, warm winds.

With understanding comes progress, Uday reasons. With a policy of 'fires out' unless absolutely necessary, the sense of smokiness has been reduced to a hint in the wines, contrasting earlier vintages 'where it was very overpowering.'

Now in its eighth vintage, Mandala releases 60,000 bottles a year, although their family-owned winery on the banks of the Gangapur dam has a capacity for four times that amount.

Grapevines are mostly sown on the iron-rich soils of the Nashik Valley, an area increasingly nicknamed 'India's Napa' by enthusiastic winemakers locally on account not only of its aesthetics, but its suitability to support quality wine production. 'We are next to the river bed with plenty of sunshine and water,' says Kumar, 'a lovely little valley known for its sunny days and cool nights.'

However, only two decades ago, this was a region known for being India's largest producer of edible grapes for the table. Varieties included the sweet, plump Thompson Seedless. Kumar praises the government of Maharashtra for helping to turn things around, in the process inspiring locals to embrace wine culture. 'They have given a lot of subsidies to grow wine grapes, to kick-start wine as an industry,' he says. 'They also gave advice on viticulture and guaranteed that fruit would be sold. And the wines have become very well appreciated locally.' The support on offer includes a recommendation for planting classic French varieties, such as the Sauvignon Blanc of the Loire, Syrah (or Shiraz) of the Rhône valley, and Cabernet Sauvignon of Bordeaux fame.

So, what do Mandala's wines taste like? 'It's very different,' says Kumar, taking the example of the Sauvignon Blanc. 'When you drink it, it's an Indian Sauvignon Blanc, not another which tastes identikit. Yes, we're using French grapes, but at heart, our soil is Indian. We're definitely bringing something new to the world.'

Although Kumar notes that Indian wines are well-applied to the 'ready market' of Britain's Indian restaurants, he is keen not to 'ghetto-ise' them. 'Rather than set out to make wines for curry, we set out to make good wines in general,' he says. 'They are deep, full-bodied wines, comparable to other top brand wines. And so we'd like to be represented widely.'



Kumar visits the mostly smokeless vines of Mandala and the modern winery up to three times a year. He notices with the benefit of age, wines from the more established vines (currently averaging 16 years) contribute greater flavour impact to the eventual pours. 'Every year we're in a better position,' he says. There is also the project to expand plantings for rosé wines.

Considering his medical background, Kumar of course believes Mandala's wines are healthful. 'I'm talking to a journalist, so better say the right thing,' he jokes, adding the caveat that, 'anything in excess is bad for you. He pauses, then releases a sort of slogan in staccato; 'Mandala is best enjoyed with good company and good food.'

Before I take leave of Kumar, he shares the news of a possible coup of a deal with Galleries Lafayette in Paris to stock the wines, 'which would open up a lot of channels.' If so, it could see Kumar's dream of his children entering the wine business eventually come true. 'My daughter, Anjali, is only seven, but already has a very good sense of smell: she is able to swirl and sniff and tell me the characteristics of my wines...'

## THE RANGE

Mandala's exuberant Sauvignon Blanc offers a palate akin to juiced fresh passionfruit and lemongrass. In red terms, the Cabernet Sauvignon brings together layers of ripe blackcurrant-like fruit, while the Reserve shows a slight frame of vanilla - evidence of the 9 months it spent softening in new French oak casks. Finally, the Shiraz Private Collection is arguably the most concentrated and spice-laden of the range, with supple black tea-like tannins which add texture.

[mandalavalley.com](http://mandalavalley.com)

## SHIRAZ AND CINNAMON

*Working alongside executive chef Vivek Singh, Laurent Chaniac is sommelier of The Cinnamon Club at London's Old Westminster Library, Great Smith Street, where he showcases Mandala Valley's 2010 Shiraz.*

### DOES MANDALA VALLEY OFFER A TRUE TASTE OF INDIA?

Yes. It has a distinctive signature of the hotter climate: the fruit element in the wine is rich, ripe and upfront with an alcohol content verging on the higher spectrum. But this is balanced by a sufficient feeling of fruit and tannins which are both textured and soft. The wines have progressed and no longer have a smoky signature.

### WHAT ARE THE MOST INVIGORATING FOOD MATCHES YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED?

Because the wine is concentrated, it has an affinity for sweeter spices: so ideal for dishes which are stewed with rich sauces. Also, given the polished tannins, it can handle a certain amount of heat in the cuisine.

### DOES THE WINE NEED TO BE 'HAND-SOLD'?

Yes, otherwise it can be a slow mover, being the most expensive Indian wine I have on my list.

Look out for Laurent's Wine and Spice dinners [cinnamonclub.com/Wine-and-Spice](http://cinnamonclub.com/Wine-and-Spice)





## PANCH PHORON PUMPKIN RISOTTO WITH MUSTARD SCALLOPS



*Chef Ashish Bhatia's carefully-devised recipe exemplifies a successful marriage of Eastern ingredients and Western techniques. This dish merges a traditional Bengali preparation with a classic Italian one; yielding a must-try dish which pairs perfectly with the lime-like acidity of Mandala's Sauvignon Blanc.*

### INGREDIENTS Serves 4-6

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| For the panch phoron:                   | » 2 shallots, finely chopped  |
| » 1 tsp cumin seeds                     | » 300g arborio rice           |
| » 1 tsp black mustard seeds             | » 1l chicken stock            |
| » 1 tsp fennel seeds                    | » ½ tsp turmeric              |
| » 1 tsp nigella seeds                   | » ½ tsp red chilli powder     |
| » 1 tsp fenugreek seeds                 | » 1 tsp chopped ginger        |
| For the risotto:                        | » salt, to taste              |
| » 2 tbsp olive oil                      | For the scallops:             |
| » 100g butter                           | » 2 tbsp mustard oil          |
| » 1 dried red chilli                    | » 12 hand-dived king scallops |
| » 1 quantity panch phoron (as above)    | » ½ a lemon, juice only       |
| » 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped       | » pinch of sea salt           |
| » 500g pumpkin flesh, cut into 1cm dice |                               |

### METHOD

For the panch phoron, mix all the spice seeds and set aside.

For the risotto, heat the olive oil and 25g of the butter in a large frying pan set over a medium heat. Once hot, add the dried red chilli and most of the panch phoron, reserving a pinch for garnish, and fry until the seeds crackle.

Add the garlic to the oil and cook until translucent, then add the diced pumpkin and stir well. Cook for 15 minutes, until the pumpkin is tender.

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat 50g of the butter and add the chopped shallots. Cook until translucent, then add the rice, and stir evenly for 1 minute. Add a ladle of hot chicken stock to the rice, followed by the cooked pumpkin, turmeric, chilli, and chopped ginger. Stir, and cook for 2 minutes.

Add a ladleful of stock, stir, and cook for another few minutes, stirring continuously. Repeat the process until all the stock has been absorbed. Check the seasoning, then add the remaining 25g of butter, remove the pan from the heat, and keep warm.

For the scallops, heat the mustard oil in a saucepan set over high heat until the oil is smoking-hot. Reduce the heat, add the scallops, and cook for a minute on each side. Remove the scallops from the pan and place on a warm plate, and season with the lemon juice and sea salt.

To serve, spoon the risotto into deep bowls and top each serving with an equal number of scallops. Garnish with a sprinkle of the reserved panch phoron and a sprig of coriander.

*Recipe courtesy of Ashish Bhatia, head chef at Turban Street Café [turbanstreetcafe.co.uk](http://turbanstreetcafe.co.uk)*



## LASOONI JHINGA – STIR-FRIED GARLIC PRAWNS

Heightening, to exciting effect, the dish's prickle of chilli and lemon juice, Mandala's Sauvignon Blanc brings an even greater sense of exoticism.

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 16 tiger prawns, shelled, deveined and heads removed
- » ½ tsp salt
- » ½ tsp ground turmeric
- » ½ tsp red chilli powder
- » 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 5-6 fresh green garlic cloves, peeled and finely sliced
- » 1 green chilli, seeded and finely sliced
- » 1 red chilli, seeded and finely sliced
- » 7 tbsp kadai sauce (see recipe)
- » 5 spring onions, including green part of stems, finely sliced
- » ½ a lemon, juice only
- » salt, to taste

### METHOD

Rub the prawns with the salt, turmeric and chilli powder and set aside for at least 30 minutes.

Heat the oil in a pan, preferably a wok, and cook the garlic. When it is lightly browned, add the chillies and sauté for about 30 seconds. Toss in the prawns to sear for barely a minute, then add the kadai sauce (see recipe) followed by the spring onions. Stir-fry over high heat for 1 minute. Add the lemon juice and salt to taste, and serve hot.

## KADAI SAUCE

Use the amount required for the Lasooni jhinga, then store the remainder in the refrigerator and use within a week; or cool immediately and store in the freezer for up to 1 month. The boldly-spiced Shiraz Premium Collection from Mandala brings a sense of earthiness to this already-savoury dish. Decant it to allow a little softening interaction with oxygen before serving in large, tulip-shaped glasses.

Makes 250g

### INGREDIENTS

- » 6-7 whole black peppercorns
- » 1 ½ tbsp coriander seeds
- » 4-5 dried red chillies, seeds removed
- » 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1 medium Spanish onion, chopped
- » 3-4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- » ¾ -inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- » 2 green chillies, chopped
- » ½ tsp chilli powder
- » 1 tsp paprika powder
- » 300g tomatoes, finely chopped
- » 1 tbsp tomato purée
- » salt, to taste

### METHOD

Lightly dry-roast the peppercorns, coriander seeds and dried red chillies in a frying pan for about 30 seconds, then lightly crush them in a mortar.

Heat the oil in a pan and cook the onion gently until translucent. Add the garlic and ginger and lightly brown. Increasing the heat, add the green chillies and sauté for 1 minute, then lower the heat again and add the roasted spices and the chilli and paprika powders.

After 1 minute, add the chopped tomatoes and cook over medium heat until the mixture reduces by a half, about 30-45 minutes. Stir in the tomato purée and season with salt to taste.

*Recipe courtesy of Mehernosh Mody, executive chef at La Porte des Indes [laportedesindes.com](http://laportedesindes.com)*

## HYDERABADI LAMB BIRYANI

Another good match for the Sauvignon Blanc, which cuts through the tasty fattiness of the lamb.

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

For the marinade:

- » ½ an onion, sliced
- » 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- » 4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- » 2 cloves
- » 3 cardamom pods
- » 2 bay leaves
- » 1-inch piece cinnamon stick
- » 1 tsp black cumin seeds
- » 1 tsp red chilli powder
- » 1 tsp ground turmeric
- » 4 tbsp yoghurt

For the meat:

- » 1 kg boned leg of lamb, cut into 1-inch cubes
- » 3 tbsp ghee
- » 500ml meat stock
- » 1 tbsp cream
- » ½ lemon, juice only
- » 1 tsp ground cardamom
- » 1 tsp ground mace
- » 2 tomatoes, diced
- » 1-inch piece fresh ginger, Julienned
- » 2 green chillies, Julienned
- » few strands saffron, soaked in milk
- » a knob of butter, diced

For the rice:

- » 500g Basmati rice
- » 1 tsp coriander seeds
- » 1 tsp black cumin seeds
- » 2 cloves
- » 3 cardamom pods
- » 1-inch piece cinnamon stick
- » salt, to taste

To serve:

- » vegetable raita





## METHOD

For the marinade, fry the onion in vegetable oil until brown. Pound the chopped ginger and garlic in a mortar with a little water to make a paste. Dry-roast the cloves, cardamom pods, bay leaves and cinnamon, grind them together into a powder, and mix with all the remaining marinade ingredients.

Coat the cubed lamb with the marinade and set aside for 1 hour.

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat the ghee and seal the lamb cubes on all sides over high heat. Lower the heat and cook gently for 10 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Add enough meat stock to barely cover the lamb cubes and cook over medium heat until almost done, about 40 minutes, stirring occasionally and allowing the stock to reduce to a thickish consistency.

Meanwhile rinse the rice in a sieve under running water and drain. Cut a square of muslin large enough to contain the spices for the rice, put them into it and tie with thread. Put cold water equal to twice the volume of the rice into a saucepan with this spice bag and bring to the boil, add salt to taste, and put in the rice. Return to the boil and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes, then remove the spice bag and drain the rice.

Preheat the oven to 180C.

Lower the heat under the lamb and stir in the cream, lemon juice, ground cardamom and mace, diced tomatoes, the ginger and chilli Julienne strips, and half the saffron. Spread the rice in an even layer over the meat. Drizzle over the remaining saffron in its milk and dot with the butter. Cover the saucepan with a damp muslin cloth or with kitchen foil and a lid to seal in moisture and cook in the oven for 12 - 15 minutes. Alternatively, finish the cooking on the stove over a very gentle heat.

Serve hot, accompanied by vegetable raita.

*Recipe courtesy of Mehernosh Mody, executive chef at La Porte des Indes [laportedesindes.com](http://laportedesindes.com)*

## BEIGNETS D'AUBERGINE - AUBERGINE FRITTERS

*These crisply-fried aubergine fritters are the ideal appetiser paired with a glass of Mandala's 'JOUvin' pulled from the fridge.*

Makes 12

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 medium aubergines (weighing about 125g each)
- » 80g gruyere or cheddar cheese, grated
- » 4 tbsp paneer or cottage cheese
- » ½ a green pepper, deseeded and grated
- » ½ a red pepper, deseeded and grated
- » ½ tsp ground cumin
- » ½ tsp ground paprika
- » salt, to taste
- » 120g gram flour
- » pinch of bicarbonate of soda
- » ½ tsp ajwain seeds
- » vegetable oil, to deep-fry
- » tamarind sauce, to serve (optional)

### METHOD

Slice the aubergines 1cm thick, then slit each slice horizontally, leaving an edge uncut to hold the two halves together.

Mix together the grated cheese and paneer or cottage cheese. Squeeze any moisture out of the grated peppers and add them to the cheeses with the ground spices. Add salt to taste, mix well, and spread the cheese mixture into the pockets you have made in the aubergine slices.

Mix the gram flour with a pinch of bicarbonate of soda, the ajwain seeds and a pinch of salt, and slowly mix in enough water to make a thick, smooth batter.

Heat the oil for deep-frying to 170C. Dip the stuffed aubergine pockets into the batter and deep-fry until golden brown, about 3-4 minutes.

Serve hot with tamarind sauce.

*Recipe courtesy of executive chef Mehernosh Mody at La Porte des Indes [laportedesindes.com](http://laportedesindes.com)*







**TIP**  
For best results,  
cook the rendang the  
day before you intend  
to eat it.

## LAMB SHANK RENDANG

Chef Ashish Bhatia says, 'This rich, spicy Indonesian stew is usually cooked with beef, but the lamb shanks' flavour works really well with the spices. It's best eaten a day after making, paired with the gentle tannins of Mandala's Shiraz.'

### INGREDIENTS Serves 4-6

#### For the spice paste:

- » 10 shallots
- » 1½-inch piece fresh galangal
- » 1 stalk lemongrass
- » ½ tsp ground turmeric
- » 8 cloves garlic
- » 3 tbsp roughly chopped ginger
- » 10 fresh birdseye chillies (or to taste)

#### For the rendang:

- » 4 lamb shanks
- » 6 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 2-inch piece cinnamon stick
- » 4 cloves
- » 4 star anise
- » 125ml lukewarm water
- » 2 lemongrass stalks, bruised and sliced
- » 6 kaffir lime leaves
- » salt, to taste
- » 2 tsp palm sugar
- » 500ml thick coconut milk

#### To garnish:

- » 6 tbsp toasted coconut flakes or kerisik (a Malaysian ground coconut condiment, available from Asian stores)
- » kaffir lime leaves

## METHOD

For the spice paste, blitz all the ingredients together in a blender, adding a little water if required, to make a nice smooth paste. Reserve until required.

Pat the lamb shanks dry with kitchen towel and heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. When hot, add the shanks and sear on for about 2 minutes on each side, until lightly golden all over.

Remove the shanks from the pan and set aside. Turn down the heat to medium, and add the cinnamon stick, cloves, and star anise to the oil left in the cooking pot. Stir the spices for a minute, making sure they don't burn; allowing them to flavour the oil.

Add the spice paste and cook over medium heat for 10-12 minutes, stirring continuously. Add half the water, stir and cook for a minute, then add the rest. If the paste is sticking to the bottom of the pan, add more water and continue cooking for 15 minutes.

When oil appears on the surface of the frying spice paste, this indicates that it is properly cooked. When this happens, add the lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, salt, palm sugar, coconut milk, and remaining water, and bring the sauce to a vigorous boil.

Add the lamb shanks to the sauce and bring back to the boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover the pan, and cook for 45 minutes, stirring every so often. Check to see if the lamb is fork-tender and the sauce thick; if not, cook for a further 15 minutes.

Once tender, optionally remove the lemongrass stalks and whole spices, garnish with kerisik or toasted coconut flakes and fresh kaffir lime leaves, and serve with steamed rice.

*Recipe courtesy of Ashish Bhatia, head chef at Turban Street Café [turbanstreetcafe.co.uk](http://turbanstreetcafe.co.uk)*



## PATRA NI MACHI – PARSI FISH STEAMED WITH COCONUT CHUTNEY

*Who said fish had to be served with white wine? Mandala's Cabernet brings a workable, blackcurrant fruitiness to attractively contrast the soothing, coconut-laden dish.*

Serves 4

© Tony Le Duc

### INGREDIENTS

For the fish:

- » 1 good-sized lemon sole, cut into 4 fillets
- » 1 tsp salt
- » 1 tsp pepper
- » a little fresh lemon juice

For the coconut chutney:

- » ½ bunch fresh coriander
- » 2-3 sprigs mint
- » 1 green chilli, roughly chopped

- » ½ tsp cumin seeds
- » 2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
- » 2 tbsp freshly grated coconut
- » ½ lemon, juice only
- » salt, to taste

To assemble and cook:

- » 1 banana leaf (or use parchment paper or foil)

### METHOD

Season the fish fillets with salt and pepper rubbed in with a little lemon juice, and set aside.

Make chutney by pounding or processing to a fine paste the coriander, mint, green chilli, cumin seeds and garlic. Add the grated coconut, the rest of the lemon juice and salt to taste.

Cut the banana leaf into four sheets large enough to fold into parcels around the fish. Spread the coconut mixture over the fillets, fold them to form 4 sandwiches, place them on the banana leaf sheets (or parchment paper or foil) and fold the wrapper over the fillets to form parcels.

Steam the parcels until the fish is cooked - about 5-7 minutes - and serve hot.

*Recipe courtesy of Mehernosh Mody, executive chef at La Porte des Indes [laportedesindes.com](http://laportedesindes.com)*



# VODKA IN GLORIOUS HD

Andre Jackson explores the finer side of vodka as he gets to grips with Heavy Water – a small Scandinavian spirit brand that punches above its weight

‘High definition’. It’s a term that most associate with flatscreen televisions. It exudes sharpness, clarity and quality, a step up from standard definition. However, it wasn’t until I encountered Heavy Water that I realised that the term ‘high definition’ is not strictly reserved for screens; vodka can indeed harbour these same standout qualities.

Not to be confused with water that contains heavy hydrogen or deuterium and is often thought of as radioactive, Heavy Water vodka is the brainchild of a group of self-confessed Swedish vodkaphiles whose primary aim was to make a product that best represented their deep love for vodka. By their own admission, Heavy Water is the smallest vodka company on the planet at the time of writing, but my own encounter with the brand certainly leaves me with the impression that it is very capable of holding its own in the arena.

Since overtaking whisky in 2007, vodka has been the favourite spirit in the UK, with 108 million bottles a year sold on these shores and sales estimated at £2.2 billion. Heavy Water founder Geir is quick to point out

the difference between the brand and big names like Belvedere and Grey Goose or celebrity-owned vanity projects like Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs’s Cîroc: ‘We’re not a big corporation developing a product for profit or a celebrity looking to get ‘in’ on the vodka market. We wanted to make a product that was free from the flaws that are found in even the best of vodkas on the market. It took us years to develop and perfect Heavy Water, but we certainly achieved what we set out to do.’

‘The water is drawn from a 10,000 year-old, recently-discovered underground lake nestled beneath the Swedish countryside. That water was a find that set the tone for Heavy Water’s whole vodka-making process’



## Scandinavian style

The majority of the world's top vodka brands originate from a similar part of the world. Both Russia and Poland are great consumers and producers; each bringing their own national slant – smooth Russian Standard, for example, has a subtle, bread-like aroma, and a typically warm Russian finish. Heavy Water is similarly influenced by its Scandinavian roots; made with Swedish winter wheat that's harvested six months later than regular wheat and is higher in starch – producing vodka whose quality is far higher.

Wheat-based vodkas generally have a slightly sweeter taste, sometimes containing the palate-testing flavours of fennel and licorice. This creates a much lighter, smoother style in comparison to vodkas made with potato and rye - which tend to contain more peppery characters. Heavy Water's bottle also has its roots in the Nordic region; originally created by Swedish designers and then further refined by a Norwegian designer. The vodka itself oozes purity and cleanliness, qualities often associated with northern Europe. Many other brands add glucose, fructose and glycerine to mask the impurities of the vodka or to create an impression of creaminess on the tongue, but Heavy Water opts to keep its Scandinavian spirit pure and natural.

## Making the magic

Created and developed on a small estate in Sweden and bottled on the south shore of Northern Europe's biggest lake, Heavy Water clearly shies away from the spectre of mass production. Instead, it sticks to more traditional vodka-making methods to give it a more organic feel. The water used is from a 10,000 year-old, recently-discovered underground lake that originates from the last Ice Age. Nestled beneath the Swedish countryside, it's a big part of what makes Heavy Water unique. Uncovered by an independent vendor who was looking to put in a well for his roadside food stand, the water contains no trace pollutants, the bane of most modern, unpurified vodkas. It is also virtually mineral-free - a negative where beer and whisky are concerned, but perfect if you're making a premium vodka. That water was a find that set the tone for the whole process.

The water from this unique source undergoes an advanced mechanical osmosis process that forces it through microfibrils, filtering out 60% of the original water. This impure 60%, known by the aptly dismissive name of 'dross', is discarded. The remaining 40% is about as pure

as you can get, with all of its natural aroma and flavours intact, providing the base platform for Heavy Water before the distillery comes into play.

Heavy Water won't disclose just how many times the spirit is distilled, but it's certainly enough, as Geir explains. 'The amount of times that we distil Heavy Water is a trade secret, but rest assured, it is done until it's perfect. Initially, we would distil the spirit up to ten times and then have the samples blind tasted backwards until we discovered the ideal number. It's more than five times, that much I can tell you - after all, we're not making grain neutral spirits, we're making vodka.'

Lastly, we reach the filtration process, the main component in the production of vodka and yet another area in which Heavy Water has innovated. The company filters it through Scandinavian filtered coal known as Swedish black birch. The spirit is slowly dripped through a cylinder that has been packed with fresh granular black birch charcoal, resulting in a cleaner, smoother tasting beverage with very few traces of heavy alcohols that can often result in the queasy hangovers that most of us know too well.





## Behind the name

The root of Heavy Water's name is as interesting as the spirit. Steeped in historical significance for Scandinavia, it's a name that's aptly-suited to a brand that is very much the underdog in the premium vodka market. It comes from the Second World War; specifically, the little-known Norwegian 'heavy water sabotage' - a series of actions taken by a group of plucky Norwegian saboteurs to prevent a German nuclear energy project acquiring a heavy water factory in Norway, whose output could be concentrated and used to produce nuclear weapons. Between 1942 and 1944 Norwegian resistance fighters and their consistent sabotage led to the destruction of the plant. Dubbed the most successful sabotage of the war, it's certainly a statement of intent from the brand - and perhaps a nod to just how potent this stuff is.

## The 'rod of purity'

What exactly is the rod in the bottle for? Geir explains it best: 'First and foremost we thought the rod would be a fun and innovative way of displaying our logo, but it's so much more than just a marketing gimmick. Heavy Water is not just the only vodka, but the only beverage that benefits from a rod that provides built-in aeration, infusing oxygen into every pour. This achieves the same result as decanting and swirling a fine wine in a glass.'

## A heavy future

Much like the Swedish saboteurs of World War Two, Heavy Water has quite a job on its hands to overthrow its far bigger and more powerful rivals. But if I've learnt anything in my exploration of this aptly-named brand, it's that the small company won't give up without a fight. With a carefully-created product and keen attention to detail, and looking to expand operation further afield than the 15 countries in which it's currently available, it seems safe to say that Heavy Water is unlikely to require sabotage to gain a level playing field with its rivals.

More information:  
[heavywater.no](http://heavywater.no)

## Heavy Water in cocktails

*Geir suggests simply enjoying Heavy Water neat, served on the rocks. But when you're in the mood to shake things up, try one of these unique cocktails.*

### HEAVY CAIPIROSKA

Makes 1

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 4 lime wedges
- » 2 tsp sugar
- » 60ml Heavy Water vodka
- » lime slice, to garnish

#### METHOD

Muddle the limes and sugar in a rocks glass. Fill the glass with crushed ice. Add the Heavy Water vodka. Stir with a spoon and serve with a lime slice garnish.



#### VARIATION

Replace 2 of the lime wedges with 8 fresh berries of your choice and proceed as above.



### HEAVY FUSION

Makes 1

#### INGREDIENTS

For the lemongrass-ginger syrup:

- » 475g sugar
- » 475ml water
- » 2 stalks fresh lemongrass, finely chopped
- » 3 'thumbs' fresh ginger, peeled and chopped

For the cocktail:

- » 60ml Heavy Water vodka
- » 10ml fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- » 15ml lemongrass-ginger syrup (see above)
- » lime slice or a sprig of fresh mint, to garnish

#### METHOD

For the lemongrass-ginger syrup, combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes. Cover and leave to cool for 30 minutes. Strain thoroughly and store in a tightly-sealed jar until ready to use.

For the cocktail, combine all ingredients in a shaker filled with ice. Shake for 20 seconds and pour into a rocks glass. Garnish with a lime slice or sprig of fresh mint.





## Heavy Water in food

### VODKA-BATTERED FISH WITH MUSHY PEAS

*An introduction to vodka's other life as a premium ingredient in comfort food, here used alongside tonic to add something fresh to an English classic.*

Serves 4

#### INGREDIENTS

For the mushy peas:

- » 225g dried marrowfat peas
- » 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- » 35g butter
- » salt and freshly-ground black pepper

For the battered haddock:

- » 1 tbsp fresh yeast
- » pinch of salt
- » pinch of sugar
- » 175ml tonic water
- » 200g plain flour
- » 25ml vodka
- » 1 tsp cider vinegar
- » oil, for deep-frying
- » 4 x 175g haddock portions, skinned and pin bones removed
- » 2 lemons, cut into wedges

#### METHOD

For the mushy peas, soak the peas in a large bowl in three times their volume of water with the bicarbonate of soda for at least 4 hours or, if you have the time, overnight.

Drain the peas in a colander, rinse under a cold running tap and place in a large, lidded pan. Cover with water to reach about 2.5cm above the peas, cover with a lid and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer the peas for 1½-2 hours, stirring from time to time. The peas should be soft and mushy in texture but not too dry. If they are wet, continue cooking over the heat with the lid off to dry out a little. Beat in the butter, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and keep warm.

For the haddock, mix the yeast, salt and sugar in a bowl until well-combined.

Pour the tonic water into the yeast mixture and whisk in the flour, vodka and vinegar. Leave the mixture to ferment – it is ready to use when the mixture starts to bubble.

Meanwhile, heat oil to 190C in a deep fat fryer.

Coat the haddock fillets in the batter and fry in the hot oil for 3-4 minutes, or until golden-brown and crisp. Carefully remove the battered haddock with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper.

Place the haddock onto plates and serve with a dollop of the mushy peas and a wedge of lemon.

*Recipe courtesy of James Martin*

### VODKA AND BUTTERMILK PANNA COTTA WITH BERRIES

Serves 4-6

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 300ml double cream
- » 1 vanilla pod, split, seeds scraped out
- » 110g caster sugar
- » 2-3 leaves gelatine, soaked for 5 minutes in cold water then squeezed out
- » 350ml buttermilk, at room temperature
- » 25ml vodka
- » 2 punnets berries of your choice, or use a mix

#### METHOD

Chill a jug in the freezer.

Heat the double cream, vanilla pod and seeds, and 100g of the sugar in a saucepan until just boiling. Remove the pan from heat, add the soaked gelatine and buttermilk, and whisk until well-combined.

Pass the mixture through a fine sieve into the chilled jug, and then stir in the vodka.

Chill the jug in the fridge, whisking every 5 minutes, until the mixture begins to set. Pour the mixture into dariole moulds and chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours.

Mix the berries with the remaining sugar.

To serve, put the dariole moulds into a bowl of hot water for a few seconds to loosen the panna cottas, then turn out onto serving plates and garnish with the berries.

*Recipe courtesy of James Martin*



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# TRAVEL & CULTURE

Travel doesn't have to involve physical movement. Reading excellent accounts of the culinary cultures of distant locations can almost transport you to the source; as you'll encounter with our food-driven features in this section. From your sofa, we'll have you sipping METAXA in Samos, exploring the hidden restaurants of Buenos Aires, eating up an alphabet of Icelandic specialities and discovering the sweet treats classically consumed at Christmastime around the world. Recipes also abound, allowing your kitchen to become one that's truly global.

Which seasonal festivals are you celebrating this Winter? We'd love to know what you're cooking and where you're travelling...

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# Clandestine dining in *Buenos Aires*



© Getty

Heidi Fuller-Love discovers how Buenos Aires' most unique 'closed-door kitchens' have expanded the city's menu far beyond rump steak

Arriving jetlagged from Ezeiza airport on a hot January afternoon, my remise crosses Avenida Rivadavia and whisks past the pink-tinted Casa Rosado where Eva Perón gave her rousing speech to workers - and Madonna later sang Don't Cry for Me Argentina in the 1990s movie, *Evita*. I've arrived in Buenos Aires, the magical city known as 'Paris of South America' because of its fabulous architecture and fascination with all things culture.

Via a labyrinth of cobbled streets lined with bookstores, cafés and 'casa chorizos' (those typical city dwellings that have dozens of rooms strung together like chorizo sausages), my taxi takes me to San Telmo, the district where I will spend the next few months. One of Buenos Aires' oldest barrios, San Telmo was home to some of the city's wealthiest families until a plague of yellow fever forced them to abandon their elegant homes in 1871. Although succeeding waves of European immigrants later made their homes here, many of those old houses are still standing. In the 1950s, hordes of artists and musicians moved to this atmospheric barrio and San Telmo remains a hive of small theatres, homely cafés, and old fashioned milonga tango halls.



© Getty



## *Leave your hang ups at home*

I have just enough time to shower and change, before my Portenos pal Seb whisks me out to the plaza Dorrego. En route to this famous square, Seb tells me about the city's 'puertas cerradas'. Translating as 'closed-door kitchens', Buenos Aires' version of supperclubs are radically changing the city's foodie scene. Popping up all over the capital since 2011, there are now some forty puertas cerradas serving everything from vegetarian dishes to more exotic delights. 'You get together in the owner's living room and you talk to all these people you've never met while the host is cooking you up a feast,' Seb enthuses as we skip over to Dorrego square where dozens of tango dancers strut and sway beneath the dappled shade of plane trees. 'You have to understand that here in Argentina, even in the capital, we've always had pretty conservative palates - most of our restaurants serve beef and pasta - so we're pretty excited about tasting all this different food,' he adds with a laugh.

Over the next few weeks I get to know San Telmo. On Sundays I spend hours browsing the kilometres of stalls selling local craftwork, designer clothes and souvenirs on San Telmo's legendary feria; during the week I drink cortados (coffee with a splash of milk) and eat spicy chicken empanadas in the city's wood-beamed historic cafes ([54bares.com.ar](http://54bares.com.ar)), or stroll to Puerto Madere's ecological reserve to join couples and groups eating Buenos Aires' iconic, spicy chorizo choripan sandwiches and drinking bitter herbal tea mate.

Seb's favourite Puertas Cerradas are fully booked for the next few weeks, so we have dinner at Don Julio ([parrilladonjulio.com.ar](http://parrilladonjulio.com.ar)), billed as serving the best parilla in Buenos Aires, where we dig into huge mounds of delicious meat. On another evening we dine at chef Hernan Gipponi's HG restaurant ([fierrohotel.com/restaurant](http://fierrohotel.com/restaurant)), which positions itself as serving 'the best of new Argentine cuisine'. Here we nibble delicate pink Chubut shrimps and tender sweetbreads with smoked provolone and other delights; served with sommelier Andrea Rosbery's pick of wines from the Escorihuela Gascon bodega.

Finally, it's time for our first gourmet rendezvous with one of the city's puertas cerradas. Some PCs have separate seating, but quite a lot of them have communal tables, so you can leave behind any hang-ups about dining out with strangers,' Seb jokes.

## *Behind closed doors*

Buenos Aires is a sprawling city covering some 200km<sup>2</sup> and divided into a patchwork of distinctive barrios or districts, and most of the Puerta Cerradas are pretty hard to find, so I'm glad to be with city-dweller Seb as we hop on and off buses, and then take a taxi to reach our first destination.

Our first dining rendezvous is at Casa Salt Shaker ([casasaltshaker.com](http://casasaltshaker.com)), a PC in a cobbled side street of the hip Barrio Norte district. With its Facebook logo: 'Food, conversation and new friends', Casa Salt Shaker offers the classic 'Cerrada experience'.

### *Useful tips*

Book in advance - Puertas Cerradas generally have very few tables and many are only open on weekends

Bring a big wad of pesos - most Puertas Cerradas will only accept cash



Chef Dan Perlman, who has spent most of his adult life either as a chef or a sommelier in US restaurants, explains that he hadn't planned to open a supperclub. 'Originally it was a prelude to opening a regular restaurant, but we had so much fun and it's so much more flexible to be able to make a living this way, that we stuck with this instead. This way, we can plan dinners around everything else we want to do in life; plus it's much more intimate and personal of an experience, both for us and our guests, than a traditional setting would be,' he explains.

We are led to another room. Eight guests sit around a polished wood table in what looks like someone's lounge. It's a relaxing setting, but today I'm the only foreigner at the table so my halting Spanish is put to good use as we discuss politics, steak and football; although not necessarily in that order.

'Our food style is, generally, though not limited to, a blend between flavors of the Andes with traditions and style from the Mediterranean,' Dan explains as the dishes arrive: rich, garlicky, tomato-based gazpacho followed by herb-crusted cod served on a bed of corn purée topped with vegetables, and a chunk of white-chocolate-topped cheesecake for dessert.

## Getting the PC bug

By now we've got the PC bug, so the following week we make another reservation via Facebook and head for the leafy suburb of Villa Crespo, where the cab leaves us outside a line of narrow, turn-of-the-century houses.

One of these houses is home to iLatina (ilatinabuenosaires.com), a Puerto Cerrado run by three Colombian siblings, but there is no sign outside to tell us which house it is. Luckily one of our hosts greets us and leads us through into an open-plan, wooden-floored room, with half-a-dozen occupied tables and a cooking bar at the end where chef Santiago is preparing the meal.

Seb orders Fernet-Branca, which is a favourite aperitif for Portenos. As that name suggests, iLatina serves Latin fusion food, with flavours from Colombia and the Caribbean cannily combined.

## Good to know

Although not necessarily cheap, with their 4 or 5-course menus, including wine, Puertas Cerradas still represent good value in this city of galloping inflation

We dig deep into a basket piled high with home-made banana bread and cornbread, which is served with a spicy seafood salad. This is followed by pato encebichado: strips of duck meat slathered with a creamy goat's cheese and tamarind mousse, which is served with a Malbec from the Manos Negras bodega in Mendoza. 'iLatina is all about experimenting with interesting foods in a homely atmosphere,' Santiago explains, as we lick our plates clean.

## Two more super supperclubs

A week later we are in a taxi and heading for Paladar (paladarbuenosaires.com.ar) whose chef, Pablo Abramovsky, is renowned for his innovative take on traditional Argentine cuisine. We are seated in a large second floor room of this charming house which is also the family's home. The red walls, candlelit tables and crackling fireplace result in an intimate ambiance.

Although there is less chat with strangers at Paladar, the cuisine is just as inventive. Buenos Aires-born Seb adores chef Abramovsky's food - classic Argentine cuisine, with a twist. 'This is a great place to try ingredients and dishes that you might not try back home,' Pablo explains.

Stand-out dishes, paired with wines from Mendoza's Atilio Avena vineyards, include crispy sweet potato noquis served with a pungent venison ragout, and a zest-packed mint-and-mandarin sorbet.

With only a week left in Buenos Aires, our final Puerta Cerrada pitstop is Cocina Sunae (cocinasunae.com). Reputed to be one of the city's best-value supperclubs, owner-chef Sunae serves up succulent Thai and Philippine food, inspired by her childhood in Asia.

Sitting at a table in the blissfully-shaded courtyard, we sip cocktails and sniff up the heavenly odours of chilli and fresh herbs that rise from Sunae's sizzling woks. Seb raises his glass in a toast. 'To the Puertas Cerradas who are revolutionising our city's culinary scene,' he says. 'But when it comes to comfort food, remember that we make a pretty mean steak and pasta, too,' he adds, with a grin.

## Five more foodie experiences in Buenos Aires

Sample empanadas (pastry turnovers) at shops like El San Juanino or La Aguadada in Recoleta

Drool over the city's homemade ice creams in Furchi's (Av Cabildo 1508), Fratello's (heladeriafratello.com) and other traditional heladerías

Take a cooking class and learn to make empanadas, chimichurri and more with Dan at Casa Salt Shaker

Head out on a culinary walking tour with well-known food tour company Fuudis (fuudis.com)

Learn all about the local wines during a tasting session at the Park Hyatt's wine and cheese cellar (buenosaires.park.hyatt.com)





© Casa Salt Shaker

## ENSALADA AMAZONICA – AMAZON SALAD

We created this dish to honour some of the flavours that we found when travelling in the Amazon – where the core elements of this dish would not be out of place. There, the sauce for the vegetables might be made from a purée of chillies and 'cocona', a fruit that has a flavour reminiscent of tomatoes and lemons.

Serves 6

### INGREDIENTS

For the roasted garlic:

- » 1 head garlic
- » olive oil

For the roasted tomatoes:

- » 6 ripe plum tomatoes
- » salt and pepper
- » dried basil, parsley, thyme and oregano
- » olive oil

For the avocado mousse:

- » 2 ripe avocados
- » 2 limes
- » 1 clove garlic
- » 100ml cream
- » 100g mascarpone
- » 25ml sweet wine
- » 1 hot green chilli
- » 1 small bunch coriander, leaves and stems
- » salt

For the salad:

- » 1 jar/can hearts of palm (roughly 240g drained weight)
- » 1 lemon, juice only
- » salt and pepper, to taste

To serve:

- » herb cheese (we have a local semi-aged farmer's cheese flecked with basil that we particularly like)
- » chives, finely chopped

### TIP

If you'd prefer the avocado mousse to be dairy-free, substitute 200g mayonnaise for the cream and mascarpone.

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to its highest setting.

For the roasted garlic, place the head of garlic on a piece of foil big enough to wrap it up and drizzle with olive oil. Wrap it up in, place in a ramekin, and bake for 45 minutes-1 hour.

For the roasted tomatoes, cut the tomatoes into ½ cm-thick slices and lay out on an oiled baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and a mix of the dried herbs, then drizzle with olive oil.

Place the baking sheet in the oven and cook for roughly 10 minutes, until the tomatoes are just starting to colour. They should also have given off a good amount of their juices. Set tomatoes aside and chill, reserving the liquid from the pan.

For the avocado mousse, place the avocado flesh in a blender. Add the lime juice and remaining ingredients (starting with about 1 tsp of salt), and blend until smooth. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed, then set aside.

For the salad, drain the hearts of palm and use a vegetable peeler to cut them lengthwise into thin strips.

In a bowl, mix the reserved juices from the roasted tomatoes, lemon juice, and the pulp from the roasted head of garlic. Whisk together well and season to taste, then toss with the strips of hearts of palm.

To serve, arrange the roasted tomato slices on plates, topping each with a small scoop of the avocado mousse. Top with a mound of dressed hearts of palm, shavings of herb cheese, and chives.

Recipe & image courtesy of Casa Salt Shaker [casasaltshaker.com](http://casasaltshaker.com)

## PARAGUAYAN CHEESE BREAD

Makes 30 balls

### INGREDIENTS

- » 600g cornflour
- » 600g fontina, grated
- » 12g salt
- » 10g baking powder
- » 2 eggs
- » 200ml milk
- » 75g butter, melted

### METHOD

In a bowl, mix together the cornflour, cheese, salt and baking powder.

Add the eggs, milk, and butter, and mix until you get a semi-soft dough.

Form into small balls and place in the fridge on a baking sheet for at least 1 hour.

When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 220C, then bake for 15-20 minutes until golden and cooked through.

Recipe courtesy of Pablo Abramovsky at Paladar Buenos Aires [paladarbuenosaires.com.ar](http://paladarbuenosaires.com.ar)







## CREAMED SWEETCORN

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 75g butter
- » 75g flour
- » 300ml milk
- » 500g cooked sweetcorn kernels, pureéd and sieved
- » salt, pepper, and ground mace, to taste

### METHOD

Melt the butter in a saucepan, then add the flour and cook until it turns golden and comes together in a roux.

Slowly add the milk, stirring to combine the mixture into a smooth béchamel sauce, then thoroughly mix in the sweetcorn pureé.

Season to taste with salt, pepper and ground mace. Eat as a side dish or use to fill tarts and empanadas.

*Recipe courtesy of Pablo Abramovsky at Paladar Buenos Aires  
paladarbuenosaires.com.ar*

## PALM HEART TART

Serves 6 as a main course, 10 as an appetiser

### INGREDIENTS

For the pastry:

- » 250g plain flour
- » pinch of salt
- » 200g butter
- » 125g whipped cream cheese or sour cream

For the filling:

- » 75g butter
- » 6 tbsp flour
- » 500ml milk
- » 1 tsp ancho or chipotle chilli paste
- » 1 tsp salt
- » 200g manchego, grated
- » 1 egg
- » 1 large can palm hearts (roughly 400g drained weight), chopped

To serve:

- » 1 bunch rocket
- » 100ml balsamic vinegar, reduced over low heat to yield about 2 tbsp of balsamic syrup
- » olive oil
- » salt and pepper

### METHOD

For the pastry, pulse together the flour, salt and butter in a food processor, until you have a crumbly texture.

Add in the whipped cream cheese or sour cream, and pulse to just combine - you should have a dough that's so soft it's actually spreadable.

Spread the mixture evenly across a 24 cm springform cake tin, with the edges coming up to a height of 3cm. Place in the freezer for 30 minutes.

For the filling, melt the butter over a low heat, add in the flour, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly, to create a light roux.

Whisk in the milk, making sure to break up any lumps of flour.

Increase heat to medium and cook, stirring regularly, until thickened (which should happen about 2 minutes after it reaches the point where it starts to simmer).

Remove from heat, and whisk in the chilli paste, salt, manchego, and egg.

To assemble and cook the tart, preheat the oven to 170C.

Placing the springform tin on a baking sheet, as they have a tendency to leak as the butter in the crust melts.

Scatter the drained, chopped palm hearts over the chilled tart crust and cover with the white sauce mixture.

Bake for 50 minutes-1 hour, turning occasionally to make sure the tart cooks evenly.

Remove the tart from the oven when the tart is golden brown on both the top and the crust and the filling is just firm to the touch, and allow to cool.

To serve, dress the rocket with about half of the reduced balsamic, a splash of olive oil, and salt and pepper. Place wedges of the tart on serving plates, top with the dressed rocket, and drizzle the rest of the balsamic syrup decoratively around the plate.

*Recipe & image courtesy of Casa Salt Shaker  
casasaltshaker.com*

© Casa Salt Shaker







© Casa Salt Shaker

## BARU-STYLE CEVICHE

Serves 20

### INGREDIENTS

- » 600g white fish (try sole or seabass), cleaned and deboned, cut into 1cm cubes
- » salt and pepper, to taste
- » ½ bunch fresh coriander, leaves only, finely chopped
- » 1 rocoto chilli, roughly chopped
- » 250ml freshly-squeezed lime juice
- » 2 red onions, roughly chopped
- » 2 green peppers, roughly chopped
- » 100ml coconut milk
- » 100ml lychee water

### METHOD

Put the fish in a bowl and dust with salt and pepper. Add the coriander and rocoto chill, and mix lightly. Add half the lime juice, mix well, and leave to stand for 3-5 minutes.

Add the red onion, green pepper, and remaining lime juice. Stir carefully but thoroughly; making sure all of the fish is submerged and coated in the marinade. Add the coconut milk and lychee water, stir, correct the seasoning, and serve.

*Recipe and image courtesy of Laura Macias at ILatina  
ilatinabuenosaires.com*

## CHUPE DE CAMARONES - PERUVIAN PRAWN CHOWDER

Serves 20

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- » 1kg prawns, deshelled, deveined and cleaned
- » 3 cloves garlic, minced
- » 150ml brandy
- » 1 red pepper, roughly chopped
- » 1 stalk celery, roughly chopped
- » 4 leeks, white and light green parts only, roughly chopped
- » 2 onions, roughly chopped
- » 2 carrots, roughly chopped
- » 1 green plantain, roughly chopped
- » 1 bunch fresh coriander, roughly chopped
- » 3 tbsp aji panca chilli paste (available from vivaperu.co.uk)
- » 6 tbsp lemon juice
- » salt and pepper, to taste

### METHOD

For the chupe, heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot set over medium heat, then add the prawns and sauté briefly. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute longer before adding the brandy. Immediately add all the vegetables and the coriander, and sauté for 2 minutes.

Cover with water, and add the chilli paste. Stir well and bring to the boil, then reduce heat to low and let simmer for 2-3 hours. Remove the pan from the heat, process the mixture in a blender to a smooth paste, and strain through a medium-gauge sieve.

Add the lemon juice, season, and serve immediately.

*Recipe & image courtesy of Laura Macias  
at ILatina ilatinabuenosaires.com*



© Latina



# A bowl of soul

There's far more to soup than its ability to ward off winter chills. *Deena Kakaya* discovers that a bowl of broth is often the very essence of a culture





Hot and sour soup –  
Chinese spicy broth.  
See recipe on page 132

In an age of obesity, sugar debates, fruit juice worries and concerns over whether we should be eating 5-a-day or even more, I think it is most definitely time to seek comfort and well-being in the good stuff. We need not turn to produce made of bags of sugar and slabs of butter to soothe away the chills of winter, or alleviate the woes of commuting to work in the dark and frosty mornings and returning home in the quiet, street-lit, sleepy night. Forget about the instant but short-lived sugar hit and welcome in the embrace of a steaming hot, nourishing and variety-filled bowl of soup. Thankfully, variety does not need to mean a choice of the classic tomato, leek and potato or minestrone, as gorgeously satisfying as they are. Around the world is inspiration galore; stemming from family customs, religious celebrations, and cultural amalgamation.

In our house, soup IS dinner. I can't remember the last time I served soup as a starter to a meal, or even one that you would drink. For me, soup is definitely to be eaten and unquestionably is a meal that cajoles, heals and allures all the senses with steams that mingle spices and sensations. Partly because soup is so giving and filling, I know there would not be room for much else – so a complete meal it is. In our house there are often massive, simmering pots of vegetables, pulses and beans that simmer away in the sumptuous and scrumptious company of pasta or grains, within tomatoes, or a vegetable stock, maybe a background of miso or perhaps even coconut milk. I spice up most of my soups with medicinal and delicious spices that waft their aroma throughout the home and street, and make for happy eating with loved ones; what is a few slurps or splash marks between friends? We mop the soup up with a variety of breads. There is something nostalgic in the simplicity and ease of soup. Perhaps the simplicity is deceptive because grainy, salty, overly creamy and just wet and bland soups are all too common.

## My tips for making the best ever soup

- A common soup blunder, especially if you are using a ready-made stock is that that it becomes too salty. Add a potato or two and add some more liquid to absorb some of the liquid and salt.
- Who wants to drink soup out of a straw? The splendour of a hearty and thick bowl of soup just cannot be experienced if your soup is simply too wet. Quick-fix your overly wet soup by mixing a couple of teaspoons of cornflour in some cold water and then add it to a simmering stock.
- To enhance texture, wilt some greens (like spinach) into the soup just 2-5 minutes before the soup is ready. A bit of silky bite adds to the loveliness of the meal.
- Use the rind of vegetarian hard cheese or parmesan for a full and bold stock for your soup.
- Save the stems of mushrooms like shitake from other recipes and use them to flavour your soups.
- Add a swirl of crème fraiche or yoghurt when serving your soup for a tangy and creamy note that is more virtuous than double cream.
- Cut each of your vegetables to the same size for evenness of texture when cooking your soup.
- Never make a soup without onions and garlic.
- Home-made croutons are on another level compared to the long-life. I normally use a combination of olive oil and butter and toss them on a non-stick pan on a low flame with some black sesame seeds. If you have slightly stale bread, they'll crisp up with ease.
- For creaminess without the cream, try soaking 3-5 tablespoons of cashews in milk for 20-30 minutes and then blitzing them smooth so that they aren't lumpy or gritty. You will experience instant sweet creaminess, making for a soup that thinks it is naughtier than it really is.



## Take stock from the world

This love for soup isn't just for the occasions we find ourselves time poor. There are other occasions for soup; in North Africa the fast of Ramadan is often broken with harira. Fragrant with luxurious saffron and generously spiced with cumin, cinnamon and coriander, this is a soup that will revitalise sleepy taste buds and quieten the calls of an empty stomach with the rice, puy lentils and chickpeas that soak up the buttery juices of the root vegetables and the pretty pink-yellow colours of paprika and turmeric. Some versions of harira use tomatoes for the base but I think this takes away from the natural magnificence of the herbs and spices used in this provocative recipe, so I have added the tomatoes later, in balance with the onions and garlic to add sweetness and citrus essences. Harira is often served in North Africa with houmous toasts, hard boiled eggs sprinkled with cumin and salt, figs or dates. In Algeria, they serve it with wedges of lemon as I have for this recipe...

### HARIRA – NORTH AFRICAN LENTIL AND CHICKPEA SOUP

Serves 4-6

#### INGREDIENTS

- » 80g puy lentils
- » 1 large carrot, peeled and cut into bite-sized chunks
- » 50g celery, cut into bite-sized chunks
- » 1 large Spanish onion, sliced
- » ½ tsp turmeric
- » 1 tsp ground coriander
- » 1 stick of cinnamon
- » 1 tsp ground cumin
- » 3-4 strands good-quality saffron
- » salt, to taste
- » 1 tsp paprika
- » 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- » 1 ½l water
- » 100g long grain rice
- » 1 can of chickpeas, drained
- » 100g sweet plum or cherry tomatoes, halved
- » 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- » 2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
- » 1 lemon, quartered, to serve

#### METHOD

Put the puy lentils, carrots, celery, onion, turmeric, ground coriander, cinnamon, ground cumin, saffron, salt, paprika, butter, and water in a large saucepan and bring to a simmer.

In the meantime, boil the rice by covering it in 3 times the water to the volume of rice and drain when the grains are al dente. Rinse it in cold water and put it to one side.

When the lentil mixture has boiled for about 20 minutes, add in the chickpeas, tomatoes, parsley and coriander, and the cooked rice.

Simmer for a further 10 minutes, and serve hot with lemon wedges.



© Deena Kakaya

One of the marvellous and endearing things about soup is that some call it peasant food, and some call it a light meal for the upper class - and, to me, this means that it is a dish for everyone. The Columbian ajiaco demonstrates just this sentiment. The exact origin of ajiaco is debated but I have learned that perhaps a beautiful tradition of a village in Cuba began by villagers making this dish using their own ingredients, donations from passers-by and surplus from farmers. This dish is often made with chicken but as a vegetarian I have omitted that and kept close to the tradition of using a combination of potato varieties, sweetcorn, onion, coriander and the wonderfully fun element of using three different toppings of fresh tomato salsa, crème fraiche and avocados. You could use capers too, if you like. Imagine that Sunday lunch table in Columbia and passing around the toppings for this traditional and colourful meal, all the smiles and banter. Traditionally, a herb called 'guasacas' is used for this mighty and vivid one-pot meal and is available in Latin food shops but in the absence of it I have used a couple of bay leaves...





## AJIACO – COLUMBIAN POTATO AND SWEETCORN SOUP

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

For the soup:

- » 2 tbsp olive oil or butter
- » 1 tsp cumin seeds
- » 1 tsp fennel seeds
- » 2 bay leaves
- » 2 green chillies
- » 250g marabel potatoes (or other floury potato)
- » 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- » 3 spring onions
- » 1 ½l good-quality vegetable stock
- » 2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- » 2 guajillo chillies
- » 1 large leek, chopped into bite-sized chunks

- » 200g tinned or fresh sweetcorn
- » 250g sweet potatoes

For the coriander and tomato salsa:

- » 200g ripe red tomatoes, diced
- » 50g coriander, finely chopped
- » 2 spring onions, cut into bite-sized chunks
- » 2 cloves of garlic, minced

To garnish:

- » 1 large ripe avocado, cut into slim wedges
- » 4-8 tbsp crème fraiche

### METHOD

Put the olive oil or butter into a pan set over a low heat and add the cumin seeds, fennel seeds, bay leaves and green chillies. Once the seeds start to sizzle, stir in the marabel potatoes, garlic, and spring onions, and cook for 1 minute.

Pour in the vegetable stock and rice wine vinegar and bring the soup to a simmer before adding the guajillo chillies.

Simmer the soup for 10 minutes before adding the leek, sweetcorn and sweet potatoes, and then cook for a further 10 minutes.

In the meantime, prepare the salsa by combining the tomatoes, coriander, spring onions, and garlic.

Ladle the soup into bowls and dress them with the garnishes - or let diners do it themselves at the table for added fun.



*One of the reasons I turn to soup is the absolute expediency of simmering it up to lapping it up, and one of the absolute speediest soups also happens to be a restaurant favourite - the classic Chinese hot and sour soup. If it is succour and sustenance you need then go for the spice-packed balance of this dish which you could bulk up substantially with the addition of rice noodles. If you are feeling jaded and clogged then release the pressures with chillies, ginger, pepper, rice wine vinegar and fresh vinegar. Fascinatingly, unlike the western practise of eating soup before a main meal, many Chinese will eat hot and sour soup after a main meal to sober up and aid digestion.*



## HOT AND SOUR SOUP – CHINESE SPICY BROTH

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 ½l water
- » 1 tbsp vegetable stock powder
- » 2 tbsp dark soy sauce
- » 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- » 2 medium red chillies
- » 1 tbsp chilli oil
- » 1 tsp fresh ginger
- » few pinches ground white pepper
- » 10g dried wood ear mushrooms, pre-soaked in hot water for 20 minutes, then drained and finely sliced
- » 220g tinned bamboo shoots
- » 100g firm tofu, cut into 4-5cm cubes
- » 1 tsp Shaoxing rice wine vinegar
- » 2 tbsp black rice vinegar
- » 1 egg, lightly beaten
- » 1 tbsp cornflour, mixed to a paste with 2 tbsp cold water
- » 2 spring onions, finely sliced
- » 2 tbsp coriander leaves, finely chopped

### METHOD

Pour the water, vegetable stock powder, dark and light soy sauces, red chillies, chilli oil, ginger and white pepper in a deep pan and bring the soup to a simmer.

Add the wood ear mushrooms, bamboo shoots, tofu, rice wine vinegar, and black rice vinegar, and turn the heat down to medium-low. Simmer the soup for a further 10 minutes.

Stir in the egg, and then add the cornflour paste - the soup will thicken quickly. Simmer on a low flame for 3-4 minutes, add the spring onion and coriander, and serve immediately.

*Like my large steaming pots of soup that simmer reassuringly in my Hertfordshire kitchen, the traditional Greek fasolada bubbles in Greek villages through the day and has nourished many generation. Fasolada is often accompanied by crusty bread and some good quality olive oil, so this recipe is healthy for the heart in more than one way. The olive oil, when added raw at the end of cooking, will help thicken the soup and so it is worth investing in a good quality version. Full of cannellini beans and tomatoes and seasoned with parsley and oregano, fasolada, often called the 'national food of the ancient Greeks', is plump and healthful with fibre and gentle flavours that are best served lukewarm.*



© Deena Kakaya

## FASOLADA – GREEK BEAN SOUP

Serves 4-6

### INGREDIENTS

- » 3-4 tbsp olive oil
- » 1 large onion, cut into bite-sized chunks
- » salt, to taste
- » 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into bite-sized chunks
- » 400g cooked cannellini beans
- » 2 sticks of celery, cut into bite-sized chunks
- » 1 tsp chilli flakes (or to taste)
- » 1 can chopped tomatoes
- » 1 tbsp tomato puree
- » 1.2 l water
- » 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- » ground black pepper, to taste
- » 1 tsp dried oregano
- » 2 tbsp chopped fresh thyme

### METHOD

Heat the oil in a deep pan and add the onions and salt, then sauté until they soften slightly.

Stir in the carrots, cannellini beans, celery, chilli flakes, tomatoes, tomato puree, and the water, and bring the soup to a simmer. Cook the soup for approximately 20 minutes.

Add the parsley, ground black pepper, oregano, and thyme, and simmer for a further 5 minutes or until the carrots are soft enough to pierce.

Serve the soup hot with bread.

*There is so much that the world has to offer in terms of soup, here are a few more cultural and regional inspirations that you can incorporate to make the cooler season as embracing as possible;*

- Japanese miso soup epitomises convenience and health combined. Miso paste is made with fermented soy beans and works well with pre-prepared meal solutions. Store pre-chopped, crunchy vegetables in a jar and pop some miso paste or powder into the jar. Take it to work with you and simply pour over some hot water and you have a lunch that is full of vitality.
- Cauliflower creams so well in soup and is a natural pairing with cheese. Try roasting the cauliflower with garlic before blitzing for an extra sweet touch.
- For a bit of colour therapy try hot, deep pink borscht made with beetroot. If you want to stretch it to a fusion level, beetroot soup with coconut milk and Thai flavours of lemongrass, lime leaves, coriander and galangal tastes incredible.
- Sweet and a little spicy, African peanut soup is not the lightest soup but with the coconut milk and sweet potatoes it feels like a little certainly goes a long way! Garnished with crunchy peanuts and served in its entirely exotic colour, you'll forget all about winter



## LAMB SHANK BROTH WITH PEARL BARLEY

*If you are one of those people who think that soup is not a proper meal, this is the soup that will change your mind. It's hearty and generous with meltingly tender lamb. I like the pearl barley with a bit of bite, which is why I add it last.*

Serves 8

### INGREDIENTS

- » 25g butter
  - » 50 ml olive oil
  - » 150g (about 1 medium) finely diced red onion
  - » 200g (about 3 sticks) finely diced celery
  - » 1 leek, finely diced
  - » 380g (about 2 medium) peeled and finely diced carrots
  - » 3 bay leaves
  - » 1 ½ teaspoons fennel seeds
  - » 1 ½ teaspoons dried oregano
  - » 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
  - » 1 teaspoon sea salt
  - » 175g pearl barley
  - » 50g flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
  - » 25g fresh mint, roughly chopped
- Braised lamb
- » 1 ½ kg (about 4) lamb shanks
  - » 150g (about 1 medium) finely diced red onion
  - » 150g (about 1 medium) chopped carrot
  - » ½ leek, trimmed and thickly sliced
  - » 100g (about 2 sticks) chopped celery
  - » 1 teaspoon black peppercorns
  - » 3 bay leaves
  - » 3 sprigs thyme
  - » 2 sprigs rosemary
  - » 1 teaspoon dried oregano

### METHOD

Begin by braising the lamb. Place the shanks in a heavy-bottomed saucepan or pot with the chopped vegetables, pepper and herbs. Cover with 2 ½ litres of water, set the pan over a medium-high heat and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 2 hours, or until the lamb is tender and falling off the bone.

Lift the lamb from the pan using tongs or a slotted spoon and set on a plate to cool. When the lamb is cool enough to handle, shred the meat from the bones and cut any larger pieces into bite-sized pieces. Cover and set aside.

Strain the cooking liquor with a fine-mesh sieve or strainer set over a large mixing bowl. Discard the vegetables and reserve the liquid.

Melt the butter and oil together in a

heavy-bottomed saucepan or pot set over a medium heat. Add the onion, celery, leek, carrots, bay leaves, fennel seeds and oregano. Toss the vegetables in the buttery oil.

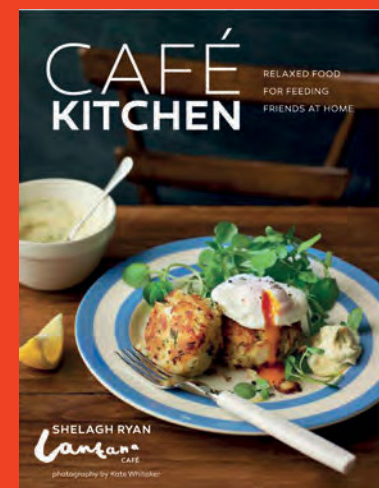
Add the sliced garlic and gently sauté for 10–15 minutes, until the vegetables are soft.

Add the reserved cooking liquid from the lamb, salt and the pearl barley. Turn up the heat and bring the mixture to the boil. Add the shredded lamb, reduce the heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the pearl barley is cooked.

Add the chopped parsley and mint and serve in bowls.

*Recipe extracted from 'Café Kitchen' by Shelagh Ryan, photography by Kate Whitaker, published by Ryland, Peters and Small*

'Soup makes for happy eating with loved ones; what is a few slurps or splash marks between friends? We mop the soup up with a variety of breads. There is something nostalgic in the simplicity and ease of soup'



'Café Kitchen' is available to Good Things readers for the special price of £11.99 including postage & packaging (rrp £16.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302 699 and quoting the reference GLR K3K



© Kate Whitaker



# FRAGRANT ISLAND

Douglas Blyde heads to Samos to capture the Greek island's perfume via the medium of METAXA

Imagery  
DOUGLAS BLYDE

It seemed the wings of the prop-plane flew close to the sacred branches of a good portion of the island's 5,000 olive trees. Fortunately, the words uttered by my host, just moments after black-circles bit tarmacadam, managed to salve away nerves built up during the apparently normal landing. I suspect a cool, warmly-coloured cocktail could have been the better option though. 'Minimise your connection to the rest of the world,' I was told, words hanging in the balmy air. 'And switch-off your mobile phone.'

Despite being a small island (a maximum of 27 miles long by 8 miles wide), wind-stoked Samos, stroked by the white-crested waves of the eastern Aegean, burgeons with history's rocky layers. It is the birthplace of Pythagoras, Epicurus, and the astronomer, Aristarchus, who first proposed the earth's orbit around the sun;

and the setting of the UNESCO-acclaimed ancient Eupalinian aqueduct. However, rather than philosophy and the miracle of water delivery, my pilgrimage concerned wine.

Crafted from ripe Muscat grapes, Samos's ferment was first mentioned in the 5th Century BC. Today, wines range from Castrol-in-colour altar fodder (designed to be cut with water), to the nectar made from sun-drenched raisins, and, five years in cask with honeycomb aromas, the unctuous 'Anthemis'. Notably, the Muscat also brings sweetness and smoothness to Greece's national brandy-like drink, METAXA.





# VINEYARDS IN GARDENS

© Douglas Blyde



'Captain George, one of 3,000 smallholders tending the island's 1,600 hectares of gnarled bushy vines, promises me a taste of the territory. But first I must earn it'

Captain George, one of 3,000 smallholders tending the island's 1,600 hectares of gnarled bushy vines, promises me a taste of the territory. But first I must earn it. Grey-haired but nimble as a goat, he leads me over boulders, smoothed over time, up the north face of Mount Ambelos. We brush past a tree laden with blushing pomegranates, then under an avenue of young, spindly olives. Briefly, we halt outside his family's private church as the crimson sunset collects at the sky's edges. An ant, the size of a small crayfish, purposefully traverses the crazy-paving. George, whose face is lit by an LED lantern, strikes a captain's bell whose clapper is attached to a small, noose-like rope.

George's modestly-sized property, which has the feel of a well-deployed garden, unravels 200 metres above the sea, while vineyards continue to a height of 900m above us. His patchwork plot is typical of islanders' holdings, he explains. Verdant Samos, basking

in its own microclimate, is a beautiful anomaly, unusual in its sheer offer of fantastic flora, he rhapsodizes. Alongside the olives of earlier, there are lemons, pears, and the Muscat family of course - 'even wild orchids grow'.

I hear George's story. On returning to his grandfather's property in 2009, the merchant seaman, who had most recently worked on cruise ships, envisaged a relaxed retirement. However, the global financial downturn saw his pension cut by four-fifths. And so, through necessity, a vine-growing hobby suddenly took a commercial turn.

We continue to George's immaculate home, dodging the corner of a sharp, tiled parapet which he covers with his hand. The largest olive tree I have ever seen shields us from the stars.

Although most grapes grown on Samos are managed by what he calls, 'the big happy family' of the cooperative, George keeps a barrel a year of homemade wine back to share with his family and friends. He pours an amber-coloured ferment from a broad-based ship's decanter. He explains how this 'wine' soared to a lofty 21.5 degrees of alcohol as it flows with a deep plug. 'I was sick that year so the grapes were picked late, meaning there was a lot of sugar to turn into alcohol'. As I study the marmalade-like liquid, George's cat, Little Girl, who turned 6 years old yesterday, slinks assertively between my legs. I remark to George that she has outgrown her name.







## MUSEUM

The following day, I visit a former winery, cellar and cooperage turned museum. Greek-Canadian guide Yiannis reveals that, although vineyards passed from generation to generation are still farmed according to tradition – ‘the only difference these days is donkeys have been replaced by trucks’ – the new generation are beginning to ask questions. ‘And that is a good thing,’ he adds. We talk more about METAXA, and the role of Aegean Muscat in soothing the brandy on the palate, which was the intention of fastidious founder, Spyros METAXA, in 1888. ‘When I see METAXA in duty free shops all over the world I’m proud that there’s some Samos in there,’ says Yiannis.

En-route to the little airport, I notice formerly barren terraces are being repaired and replanted. My taxi driver, Nicos tells me that as well as driving his very shiny 4x4, he too is a stonemason. ‘We must maximise the revenue of what we have,’ he says.

## ATHENS

An hour away from the tranquility of Samos, Athens is invigorated by the presence of Lady Gaga, who is performing in the city tonight. But, for now, I am cocooned in permanent dusk five floors beneath the crazed city amid giant oak casks brimming with METAXA. Constantinos Raptis, the fifth METAXA Master in the firm’s century-and-a-half long history, steps into view. Using confident but measured, Demos-like gestures, he patiently explains how he blends the formula. Oak-aged brandy is mixed with Muscat and a closely-guarded tincture of rose petals and Mediterranean herbs. A tall blonde assistant drips a little of the latter onto the crook of my hand using a very thin glass pipette.

I ask Constantinos, who has a responsibility for assembling over 10 million bottles of METAXA a year, how much his palate is insured for. ‘It’s a matter for my company,’ he says, with a wry smile. ‘I’ve not got a problem personally if I can’t taste!’

We pause at the wall, which visually depicts the company’s timeline. It reveals that substantial matriarch, Despina, who survived her husband, Spyros, steered METAXA through a considerable part of its history. Since September, it has again been overseen by a female managing director.

En-route to the tasting chamber, we move into a room of casks which are, this time, bathed in humming, neon pink. Once inside, I notice how



strongly the circular, specifically-illuminated table evokes the set of Dr. Strangelove. Here, we taste through METAXA’s full range, from the most popular rocket-shaped bottle of violet-scented five year-old 5 Stars, to the 7 year-old peach-and-prune-scented 7 Stars contained in an amphora-like bottle, to the more intense METAXA 12, fragrant with figs and orange peel.

We then take longer to savour Constantinos’ complex, generous, coffee-and-chocolate-scented Private Reserve, for which he has carte blanche, and then the ultimate, almondy and hazelnutty AEN / Cask No. 1. ‘It’s the oldest cask used at METAXA,’ says Constantinos, not without pride. ‘This brandy has been made in a solera system that dates back over 80 years’.

An attendee questions whether he is proud of this ‘baby’. ‘It’s hardly a baby at 80!’ he says. Constantinos is clearly a man blessed by patience. It took seven years of training to reach this stage. On days off, he fishes in the Gulf of Corinth. I ask, does he eat the fish he catches? ‘Have you tasted our fish? We cannot leave them. They are so delicious...’



© Douglas Blyde



# SEE >>

Samos Wine Museum  
(samoswine.gr)

And, when in Athens, take a guided tour of Athens with guide, Angeliki-Kely Bourni (kellybourni@hotmail.com)

# STAY >>

Princessa Riviera Resort, Pythagorion, Samos (princessa.gr) is family-run, with a particularly happening pool bar

# EAT >>

Galazio Pigadi, Vourliotes, Salmos, 83100 – sip wine from the cask alongside souvlaki under a vine-entwined pergola

# SIP >>

On the fringes of Athens, MoMix is said to be the city's 'first molecular mixology bar', where yesterday's classics are reinvented, and tomorrow's classics are created (momix.gr)



## FIG AND WALNUT TARTLETS WITH METAXA 5 STARS

Makes 8 tartlets

### INGREDIENTS

For the METAXA cream:

- » 150ml single cream, chilled
- » 50ml METAXA 5 Stars, mixed with 40g sugar and well-chilled

For the base:

- » 90g cold butter, cut into cubes
- » 20g caster sugar
- » 1 egg
- » 220g plain flour

For the fig filling:

- » 380g dried figs
- » 150ml water
- » 80ml METAXA 5 Stars
- » 1tsp ginger
- » 1 egg
- » 60g brown sugar
- » 50ml milk
- » 60g roasted, ground walnuts
- » ½ tsp chopped watercress

### METHOD

For the METAXA cream, whip the cream, gradually adding the chilled METAXA-sugar mixture as you do so, until it forms soft peaks. Chill until required.

Preheat the oven to 200C.

For the base, mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl.

Between two sheets of clingfilm, roll the mixture into a sheet measuring approximately 0.5cm thick. Cut dough into discs that are a little larger in diameter than your tartlet tins, ensuring the pastry adheres well to their surface. Trim off excess dough around the edges and prick each tartlet's base with a fork.

Bake the prepared pastry shells for 8-10 minutes, then remove from the oven and reduce the temperature to 160C.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Place the figs into a bowl with the water, the METAXA 5 Stars, and the ginger. Cover with clingfilm and let the mixture rest for 2 hours minimum (ideally overnight). Grind the fig mixture with a pestle and mortar (or in a processor, leaving it a little textured).

Meanwhile, beat the egg with the sugar, then add the milk and the fig mixture. Mix well, and then stir in the walnuts and watercress.

Divide the fig mixture between the pre-baked tartlet shells, and bake for 15 minutes. Serve warm or cold, with the chilled METAXA cream.



## PORK SHOULDER WITH METAXA 7 STARS

Serves 6



### INGREDIENTS

- » 200g roughly-chopped shallots
- » 1 leek, diced
- » 1 whole stick of celery
- » 1 carrot, diced
- » 150g whole dried apricots
- » 80g whole dried cranberries
- » black peppercorns, to taste
- » 2kg pork shoulder
- » 200ml METAXA 7 STARS
- » 300ml dry red wine
- » 500g beef stock
- » 2 tbsp olive oil
- » 80g flaked almonds, to garnish

### METHOD

Place all the vegetables, dried fruits, peppercorns and meat in a deep container.

Add the METAXA 7 Stars, red wine, and stock to cover the meat. Leave to marinate for 24 hours in the fridge.

The following day, preheat the oven to 160C. On the hob, heat the olive oil in a pan set over a medium heat. Remove the pork from the marinade, reserving the liquid and fruits, and sauté all over until browned.

Place the meat in a lined baking pan and pour over the marinade and soaked dried fruits. Cover, and bake for 4 hours.

Scatter almonds on top, and serve hot.



## THE GOLDEN SOUR Makes 1

*Designed by the Union of Winemaking Cooperatives of Samos, The Golden Sour elegantly walks the tightrope between bitterness and sweetness. Serve in a coupe or martini triangle.*

### INGREDIENTS

- » 60ml Samos Doux wine
- » 20ml METAXA 5 Stars
- » 30ml lemon juice

### METHOD

Shake all ingredients together, hard, and strain over ice, spritzing the surface of the drink with lemon zest

## PERFECT THYME

*Mixologist Giannis Petris's recipe uses one of METAXA's other most popular libations – Ouzo. Sample it at OPSO, Paddington, a new restaurant which takes its name from the ancient Greek for 'delicacy'. (opso.co.uk)*

### INGREDIENTS

- » 35ml Ouzo METAXA
- » 15ml thyme liqueur
- » 14ml violet syrup
- » 30ml fresh Lemon juice
- » 2 basil leaves, to garnish

garnish

### METHOD

Shake all ingredients together, hard, and strain over ice. Garnish with the basil leaves.



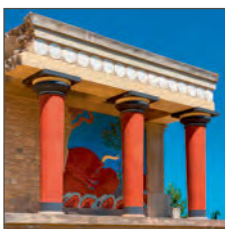
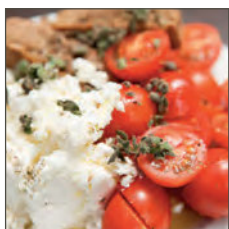




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# Godfather of Chinatown

Douglas Blyde meets leading culinary  
entrepreneur, Stanley Tse





Stanley Tse surveys the frontage of Lisle Street's SeeWoo. He opened the shop - one of the first Chinese businesses in London's Chinatown - in 1975 with his brothers. Today coherent with brightly-lit, fully-stocked aisles, it is actually formed of three units bought over time, including, says Stanley with a glint in his eye, a comparatively shadowy 'peep show palace...'

Stanley left his village in Hong Kong's New Territories for East London's India Docks in 1961. Initially toiling in Italian and French restaurant kitchens in order to send money back to his widowed mother, eight years on Stanley progressed to founding his own eateries, beginning with The Happy Star in Stanmore where he encountered a major reason to stay in Britain: his wife-to-be, Caroline. This was followed by The Lantern House, Bushey. Offering Cantonese and Peking cuisine, it soon attracted a celebrity clientele including Dame Barbara Windsor, Sir Roger Moore, and George Michael.

Determined to ensure a consistent and varied supply of quality ingredients for his eateries, and spotting opportunity, but in the spirit of cooperation with entrepreneurial Chinese migrants, Stanley begun importing provisions direct from Asia into a lock-up inside a Bermondsey railway arch. He recalls those early days. 'As restaurateurs, we became increasingly frustrated by the lack of authentic produce on our shores. SeeWoo would seek to rectify that.'

Over the ensuing decades, the business became one of the UK's largest suppliers of Oriental foods, employing over 400 across three supermarkets, a wholesale operation and factory under the badge 'Way-On'; and restaurants including a 500-cover operation in Glasgow and the contemporary SeeSushi in Paddington. In recognition of these successes, as well as the deep philanthropic streak which saw him help raise £78,000 for victims of the Sichuan Earthquake in 2008, Stanley

was awarded 'Lifetime Achievement' at the 2011 World Food Awards - the same year he was elected President of London's Chinatown Chinese Association. '40% of our staff have been with us for over 10 years,' he says, 'and some for more than 20.'

'This is one of best Chinatowns in the world - and one of biggest in Europe,' Stanley begins as we dodge delivery vans rushing to fulfil orders before the midday curfew sees the streets fully pedestrianised. One bears the number-plate 'A1 WOK'. Above us, lanterns marking Tuesday's moon festival carry casino sponsorship. '70% of people in London's casinos are Chinese,' says Stanley, reminiscing of the early days when betting in cellars below these streets was commonplace. 'But I've never been a gambler,' he says. 'I hate to lose money!'





## Cosmopolitan

Stanley sees a cosmopolitan clientele roving today's Chinatown, drawn by a more intense variety of merchants. 'Now we've got Hunan, Szechuan, Guangzhou and Taiwanese restaurants. In the old days, everywhere would be Cantonese.' A Chinese tour group marked in identical caps swerves past. 'It looks like they come from Hong Kong,' he comments. But how does he know, I ask? 'By the way they walk!'

Stanley greets the manager of the Golden Dragon restaurant, who wears notably shiny collar studs. While the duo fires jokes at each other, Stanley's daughter Lucy (SeeWoo's marketing director) points out spiky, strong-smelling durian fruits at the Loon Fung supermarket. I smelt their high, mango-like aroma long before casting eyes upon them. A blue plaque on the brick wall above informs me that 'John Dryden, Poet' once lived here, testament to the area's colourful history. 'We have to fly durian in underripe for legal reasons,' Lucy explains. 'Some customers complain.' But Stanley's more interested in the papayas. 'I'm checking out the competition,' he says. Does he rate durians? 'They're ugly smelling fruits,' he says. 'Good for a lady's complexion, while whole sea cucumbers are good for men...' I acknowledge his wink regarding that suggestively-shaped aphrodisiac. Lucy adds, 'We had one customer who came in every day for a durian; he only ate durian.'

I notice how handsome Chinatown's buildings are. 'Listed,' says Stanley. However, mammon may mean misery for some business owners. 'They keep putting the rent up,' he says. Apparently property prices are being driven higher by the influx of mainland Chinese who are prepared to pay considerably more than the local Chinese for this slice of London.

Dismissing the all-you-can-eat buffets as 'just for tourists,' Stanley gestures towards a window festooned with whole reddened ducks. 'Four Seasons is one of the busiest restaurants for ducks,' he advises, adding, almost unbelievably, 'we must get through a couple of thousand ducks a day in Chinatown.' Across the street, crescent-shaped jiaozi dumplings are being made fresh, their corners crimped fast. Despite her time-worn face, another chef crafts plump Beijing dumplings with surprisingly dexterity. Meanwhile, sweet, cream-filled 'tai yaki' guppies ('4 for £1') emerge from a waffle press, visible through another plate glass window. 'The machine costs a lot to buy, but you can make the money back in one week,' says Stanley.

Now back at SeeWoo, Stanley continues the tour, grappling with bitter, grapefruit-like pomelos then lychees. 'We're famous for our variety of veg,' he says, gesturing to servery of Chinese chives, available with flowers on or off. 'They're not cheap, but you pay for their air tickets!' he says. Stanley says the Vietnamese love to chew on sticks of cane sugar – 'good for the teeth.'

Banks of temptingly glass-topped freezers contain such delicacies as pig's uterus. Nearby, I ask after the hang fong pork sausages. 'Chinese bacon!' exclaims Stanley. And the bamboo fungus? 'Stir fry!' What about the rigid, dried flat fish? 'With won ton noodle soup!' Lucy, meanwhile, puts aside a sachet of addictive 'White Rabbit' rice paper sweets for her own children.

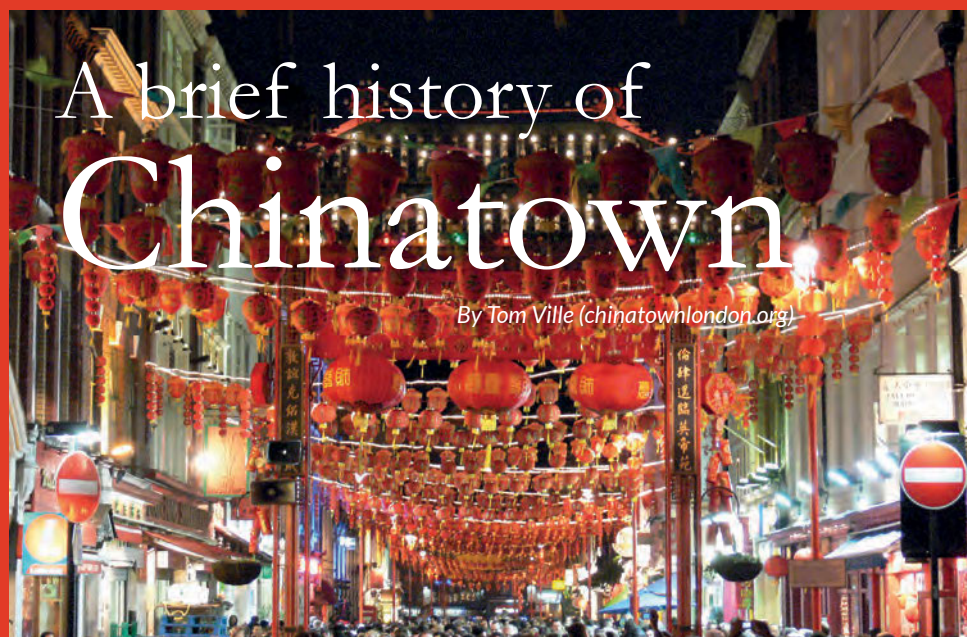




Stanley has assembled a large bag of ingredients of his own, which he brings to his friend's restaurant, Imperial China, a few doors down. There, we cross over a small stream teeming with koi carp and ascend to one of Chinatown's few private rooms, where fragrant jasmine tea and wine immediately flows. Talk somehow turns to cookery tips for snake. 'Deep-fry it if it's big, or if it's small, best in soup,' says Stanley, who is clearly a feeder. Despite the absence of serpents, we eat well: frizzy-shelled taro croquettes, tactile chicken feet, which Stanley guarantees 'come from UK' in glutinous, rich, abalone sauce, and the chef's take on Stanley's ingredients - sliced pork and bitter melon in black bean sauce. 'The bitter melon is good for your blood.'

As we leave I notice a busker melodiously playing The Godfather theme on a violin. It seems apt given Stanley's flourishing presence. It transpires SeeWoo supplies up to 80% of the businesses in Chinatown. 'If we closed for three days, there might not be any food; don't be surprised!' says Stanley. 'But we only close two days - Christmas and Boxing Day.' How does one get to work with him and his family? 'You've got to be a friend first,' he says. 'Price doesn't mean everything...'

[SeeWoo.com](#)



# A brief history of Chinatown

By Tom Ville ([chinatownlondon.org](http://chinatownlondon.org))

Haunt of Boswell and Reynolds, birthplace of the post office, first site of Ronnie Scott's, host to immigrant communities from the Huguenots to the Maltese and now London's vibrant Chinese quarter. The bustling Chinese community of restaurants and businesses has been here since the 1950s; however, the Chinatown story goes much further back - across London and all the way to the Far East.

London's original Chinatown was in the East End, where Chinese employees of the East India Company first appeared in the 18th century. The Company employed thousands of Chinese sailors; most were based in China, but a small number chose to settle at Limehouse docks. By 1914, there were a few hundred Chinese running some 30 businesses here: mostly small shops and restaurants catering to Chinese seamen. However, the post-war years posed a major threat to the small community; Limehouse had been destroyed during the Blitz, and the decline of the British shipping industry resulted in union rules that made it virtually impossible for non-British seamen to find work on British ships.

By 1950, London's Chinese were short of income and a place to live. However, a new phenomenon was to turn this around. British soldiers had returned from the Far East

with a new appetite for Chinese cuisine. A few restaurateurs set up business in Gerrard Street in the West End, a street that already had a reputation for interesting cuisine as the site of some of London's first European restaurants. The popularity of the new Chinese establishments attracted more entrepreneurs away from the East End to seek their fortunes. Today's Chinatown was born.

The area had an interesting history: one that stretched back to the terrible Great Fire of 1666 in which London was destroyed by flame. In the aftermath, attention turned west of the old city to the area of present-day Soho, then mostly farmland with a prime location near the three royal palaces of Westminster, Whitehall and St. James. The area of modern-day Chinatown was a military training ground where soldiers drilled with pikes and primitive muskets!

In 1677, Lord Gerrard, owner of the area, gave permission to a developer named Nicholas Barbon to build houses on the military ground. Barbon completed Gerrard Street in 1685 then acquired the adjoining land on the east from Lord Newport. Here, he built more houses and a livestock market, complete with a market hall and slaughterhouse which stood on the site of the present-day Newport Court.



Within a century, the area developed a lively reputation. The upstairs of the market hall was taken over by a congregation of immigrant French Huguenots and named 'the Butcher's Church' after the slaughtermen beneath. Gerrard Street became home to many of London's most famous painters, metalworkers and writers. Intellectuals and political luminaries met at the Turk's Head inn to discuss issues of the day in the liberally-alcoholic atmosphere. In the 19th century, the Newport Market area developed a reputation as a notorious criminal slum which persisted until the new streets of Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road were driven through in the late 1880s. All the while, new waves of immigrants arrived: Italians, then Jews, then Maltese. Kate Meyrick ran the notorious '43' club at 43, Gerrard Street and Ronnie Scott set up his first jazz club in the basement of number 39. By the time the Chinese arrived in the 1950s, the area had developed a reputation for great nightlife and cheap commercial rents.

By the late 1960s, Chinatown was truly established as a centre for London's Chinese community – now numbering in the tens of thousands as more workers arrived from Hong Kong's British territory. The area became home to a Chinese supermarket, Far Eastern travel agency and other services to cater for the ever-increasing number of restaurant workers. Families were reunited as wives and children arrived from Hong Kong to join their husbands; and as the community grew, so did the area's world-class Chinese cuisine. Chinese Gates and a Pavilion were added as Chinatown came of age – symbols of the success and cultural heritage of this fascinating area.

## CHINESE DUMPLINGS WITH LAMB AND CARROT

*Devoid of pretension, dumplings, or 'pot-stickers', are as likely to appear in a celebratory feast as they are on the contemporary Chinese breakfast table.*



### INGREDIENTS

**Serves 6 – makes 100-150 dumplings**

For the dipping sauce:

- » 5 tbsp vegetable oil or sunflower oil
- » 3 tbsp Chinese peppers

For the dough:

- » 1kg plain flour
- » a little warm water

For the filling:

- » 1kg carrots
- » ½ a bunch of spring onions
- » 50g fresh ginger
- » 3 tbsp five-spice powder
- » 3 tbsp Chinese pepper powder
- » 3 tbsp ground ginger
- » 3 tbsp salt
- » 4 tbsp sugar
- » 3 tbsp Chinese cooking wine
- » 3 tbsp light soy sauce
- » 2 tbsp dark soy sauce
- » 5 tbsp Chinese pepper oil (made by heating 5 tbsp of neutral oil with 3 tbsp Chinese peppers until they darken, then straining)
- » 2 tbsp sesame oil
- » 1 egg
- » 500g lamb mince
- » 4 tbsp aromatic vinegar
- » 1 tbsp chilli oil
- » salt and pepper

### METHOD

For the dipping sauce, heat the oil to almost boiling and add the Chinese peppers. Reduce heat and cook until peppers become dark. Remove peppers and cool oil. Reserve until required.

For the dough, put flour in a bowl and slowly stir in warm water until it forms a dough. Knead into a smooth ball and cover, leaving it to rest for at least 30 minutes whilst you make the filling.

For the filling, peel carrots and cut into small pieces, then steam for 20 minutes (or until tender) and leave to cool.

Finely mince the spring onions and ginger and mix with the spices, salt, sugar, cooking wine, light and dark soy sauces, Chinese pepper oil and sesame oil, and the egg. Add the lamb and stir well – and always in the same direction.

Finally, mince the cooled carrot and add to the other ingredients. Stir in the aromatic vinegar and chilli oil and season with salt and pepper to taste.

To make the dumpling cases, divide the rested dough into 100-150 small pieces and roll each piece into a circle about 6cm in diameter.

To fill the dumplings, place a small amount (about 1 teaspoon) of filling into the middle of each wrapper. Fold the wrapper over the filling into a half moon shape and pinch edges to seal.

To cook the dumplings, bring a large pan of water to the boil then add dumplings in stages – approximately 30-40 each time. Stir frequently to avoid the dumplings sticking together. When the water comes to the boil, add 125ml of cold water. Repeat this three times and then dumplings are ready. Drain and move to a plate while you cook the next batch.

*Recipe courtesy of SeeWoo [seewoo.com](http://seewoo.com)*



## TRADITIONAL CANTONESE WHOLE ROASTED DUCK

*An exciting alternative to turkey for Christmas, this exotic aromatic roast very much gets the heart beating, with a light ginger kick.*

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- » 1 x 2kg whole duck
- » 2 tbsps hoisin sauce
- » 2 tsp Chinese five-spice powder
- » 1 tbsps grated fresh ginger
- » 2 spring onions, chopped
- » 2 tbsps dry sherry
- » 2 tbsps yellow bean sauce
- » 3 tbsps honey
- » 3 tbsps dark soy sauce
- » 300ml water

### METHOD

Bring a large pan of water to the boil. Trim off visible duck fat, then prick the skin all over, piercing through fat but not meat. Plunge duck into the boiling water and blanch for one minute. Drain and dry on kitchen paper.

Stir together hoisin sauce, five-spice powder, grated ginger, spring onions, sherry and yellow bean sauce, and spread on the underside of the duck. Place it, skin side up, on a rack set over a roasting tin.

Put honey, soy sauce and water in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Pour this mixture over the duck, collecting the juices in the tin. Pour the mixture back over the duck twice more then leave the duck on the rack in a cool draughty place for about 5 hours. Alternatively, leave in front of a fan, or in a fan oven with just the fan turned on and no heat, for 2 hours. The skin of the duck should dry out and look a bit like baking parchment. Reserve the honey and soy mixture.

Preheat oven to 200C. Pour about 300ml of water into the roasting tin. Roast for approximately 1 hour, until the skin is very crisp and brown.

Pour reserved honey and soy mixture into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer for five minutes to make a sauce to serve with the roast duck.

*Recipe courtesy of SeeWoo [seewoo.com](http://seewoo.com)*



## STEAMED SEABASS WITH SOY, GINGER AND SPRING ONIONS

*A recipe designed to harmonise the sensations of sweet, sour and salty.*

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

For the fish:

- » 2 seabass, whole, scaled and gutted
- » 3 shallots, peeled and halved
- » 1 bulb garlic, un-peeled, halved
- » thumb of ginger, sliced
- » ½ a lemon, skin removed

For the sauce:

- » splash of chilli oil
- » 2 spring onions, diced
- » 3 tbsps dark soy sauce
- » 3 tbsps light soy sauce
- » 1 tbsps sugar
- » 1 tbsps cider vinegar or lime juice
- » chilli sauce, to taste

To garnish (optional):

- » fresh coriander leaves
- » spring onions - sliced lengthways

### METHOD

Place fish into a steamer with shallots, garlic, ginger and lemon, steam for 5-10 minutes (or until cooked), then place on a serving dish.

In a hot saucepan, add a splash of chilli oil and sweat the spring onions, being careful not to burn them. Pour in the dark and light soy sauces. Add sugar and cider vinegar. Taste for the balance of sweet, sour and salty, adjusting if necessary.

Add chilli sauce, then pour the mixture all over the steamed fish.

Garnish with coriander and/or strips of fresh spring onions.

Serve with steamed rice.

*Recipe courtesy of SeeWoo [seewoo.com](http://seewoo.com)*



# Sweet Talk

ZOE PERRETT SAYS THAT DISCOVERING A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF CLASSIC CHRISTMAS DESSERTS AND SWEETMEATS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE IS GUARANTEED TO MAKE THE SEASON EVEN SWEETER



In Provence, the groaning festive dessert table elicits groans of pleasure from all who view it. The classic Christmas sweet menu encompasses just over a dozen desserts; the number 13 representative of Christ and his apostles at the Last Supper. The tradition is the ultimate 'midnight feast'; indulged in after midnight mass on Christmas Eve and for a full three days thereafter.

The custom would please any sweet-toothed customer, but must it be made up of the traditional treats of a single country or culture? Cosmopolitan sugar-fiends relish a repertoire of desserts drawn from far and wide, so it would seem only sensible to modernise the menu to incorporate sweet Christmas specialities from all over the world.

The majority of traditional items on the Provençal Christmas table are simply products of nature; grapes in their black and white forms, walnuts and hazelnuts, dried figs, dates, an orange, and an apple; joined by candied fruits, quince paste, black and white nougat, and calissons - the latter list comprised of specialities that are often outsourced to skilled local artisans. The resulting spread is impressive in its bounty and highly symbolic.

In India, a similar concept is called 'kuswar' in Goa and Mangalore - but this catch-all term refers to the full gamut of Christmas sweetmeats and desserts of which there is seemingly no finite number. Baked goods are big business amongst the Catholic community; a product of the historic Portuguese presence. Baath - a coconut and semolina cake - might be joined by batter curls called 'kulkuls', neuries - sweet coconut-stuffed turnovers, stuffed crepes called alle belle (*see recipes*) and perad - a guava 'cheese' that's not so far removed from the quince version on the Provençal plate.

One of the most impressive items is the traditional bebinca; a labour-intensive, multi-layered crepe cake

that also appears in the Philippines and is a close cousin of the Dutch-Indonesian spekkoeek - hardly surprising given the same influence was felt in India during the trading days of the Dutch East India company. Spices remain today in the Netherlands' favourite speculaas biscuits; but it's orange that flavours the red-coloured mousse that the Dutch call 'Christmas pudding'.

Skipping over to Scandinavia, one finds Christmas eating is just as sweet. Danish rice pudding (see recipe) comes crowned with cherry compote and contains a single whole almond, whilst in Norway, sweet saffron-flavoured St Lucia Buns are savoured. You might finish with Finnish cardamom-scented 'pulla', or gingerbread; or eat the similarly-spicy pepparkakor cookies in Sweden.

In Poland, angel wings are not placed atop the tree, but on the plate, in deep-fried sweet pastry form, whilst the porridge-like grain-and-fruit 'kulia' is closely related to the first forms of Britain's own Christmas pudding - seen too, if one rushes over to Russia, where it's called kutya.

'Christmas cake' might be commonly consumed in the UK and Japan, but the latter is not a dark, fulsome fruitcake - rather, a light-as-air white cake coated with whipped cream with a festive greeting piped onto a chocolate plate. In Italy, panettone should have a similarly delicate texture; the classic Milanese fruited bread proved over a number of days and hung upside-down after baking.

Another commonplace Christmas confection in Italy is the chewy, egg-white-based sweet known there as torrone; as turrón in Spain; and as nougat in France - found at festive markets all over. In Belgium, stalls sell cougnou (bread of Jesus); whilst in Germany, it's lebkuchen cookies and stollen (see recipe) - a sweet, yeasted loaf whose shape resembles a swaddled infant Christ.

South America has its share of sweet Christmas breads, including the fruit-and-nut-studded Chilean 'pan de Pascua' that was actually introduced by German immigrants. One has to suspect that Mexico's melt-in-the-mouth cinnamon cookies, reposteria, could happily be consumed with a long glass of Chilean cola de mono (monkey's tail) - an eggnog-like blended beverage.

By now even those with a full set of sweet teeth should be sated, but we've barely begun. One could not fail to note Caribbean black cake, so sozzled with wine and rum it could soak in no more; Portugal's kingly 'bolo rei'; or creamy, all-American eggnog. And surely there's space to squeeze in Britain's own Holy Trinity: composed of rich fruitcake, mince pies, and Christmas pudding - not to mention the satsumas that the Japanese see as a symbol of the rising sun that will return in spring.

So dig in. Because at Christmas, you can and should indulge in everything, from everywhere.

## You can eat that! - Inedible inclusions in some traditional Christmas sweets

### SILVER CHARMS

Found in a British Christmas pudding; a thimble, a sixpence and a horseshoe amongst them

### A WISHBONE

Found in Christmas pudding alongside those silver items; allowing the finder a wish

### GOLD NUGGETS

Found inside Christmas puddings during the gold rush of 1860s Queensland

### GOLD COINS

Found in a Greek vasilopitta, denoting luck for the finder in the forthcoming year

### TITLE DEEDS TO 12 MANORS

Found beneath the crust of the pie that the nursery rhyme character Jack Horner was carrying to the king. The 'plum' in the poem refers to the single deed he pilfered

### A RING, A COIN, AND A DOLL

Found in Mexican 'rosca de reyes' (three kings' ring), along with edible candied fruits, representing the wise men's gifts to Jesus - and the infant himself

### A 'FÈVE'

Found in the galette des rois (see recipe) that's eaten for Epiphany in France. The tiny charm can be made from porcelain, gold, platinum - or even diamond. The finder of the fève is deemed the 'noble of the day'



# 13 globe-roving festive sweet treats... and a drink!



## CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE PECAN PIE

Makes 1 x 22-24cm pie

### INGREDIENTS

For the pastry:

- » 200g flour
- » 100g butter
- » 100g sugar
- » 3 egg yolks

For the filling:

- » 100g dark chocolate, chopped
- » 50g butter
- » 110g sugar
- » 250ml honey
- » 3 eggs
- » 1 capful vanilla extract
- » 225g pecans, chopped
- » ½ tsp ground cinnamon

### METHOD

For the pastry, freeze the dry ingredients for 10 minutes, then blend until they look like breadcrumbs.

Add egg yolks and mix well to a dough. Cover and place in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

For the pie, preheat the oven to 180C.

Roll out the chilled pastry and put into a 22-24cm pie dish, prick the base and coat with egg yolk.

Bake blind for 15 minutes, then remove beans and bake for another 5-10 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the filling. Melt the chocolate and butter in a bain marie, then melt the sugar and honey in a pan.

Beat the eggs and stir into the melted chocolate mixture.

Mix in the remaining ingredients and fill the pastry base with this mixture.

Bake for 25 minutes, or until pastry is golden brown and the chocolate is slightly set.

Dust with ground cinnamon to make it extra festive.

*Recipe courtesy of Porky's BBQ [porkys.co.uk](http://porkys.co.uk)*

## Sicily

### RINO'S MUM'S CUCCIDDATI - ALMOND AND FIG-FILLED CHRISTMAS COOKIES

These are the biscuits that our head chef Rino's mum makes for the family at Christmas in Sciacca. She uses strutto, which is pure pork fat, and gives a quite particular texture and flavour to baking. It has much more character than the lard you buy in the UK and is traditional in Sicilian pastries and biscuits, but you could also substitute butter.

Makes about 25-30

### INGREDIENTS

For the filling:

- » 250g blanched almonds
- » 2 egg yolks, beaten
- » 50g sultanas
- » about 100g honey
- » pinch of ground cinnamon
- » 500g dried figs, finely chopped
- » 1-2 tbsp cocoa powder

For the dough:

- » 500g plain flour, plus extra for rolling out
- » 1½ tsp baking powder
- » 125g caster sugar
- » 1 lemon, grated zest
- » seeds from 1 vanilla pod
- » 125g strutto, lard or butter
- » 1 egg
- » 50ml milk





## METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4.

To make the filling, lay the almonds in a single layer on a baking tray and put into the oven for about 8 minutes. As long as they are in a single layer you don't need to turn them. Keep an eye on them to make sure they don't burn, and when they are golden, take them out and chop them finely.

Put the almonds into a pan with the eggs, sultanas, honey, cinnamon and figs, and mix well. Stir in the cocoa, then cook on a very low heat, stirring continuously, until the mixture forms a homogeneous paste. Spoon out into a bowl, cool and then put into the fridge for an hour to firm up.

To make the dough, in a bowl mix the flour, baking powder, sugar, lemon zest and vanilla seeds. Melt the fat and add it to the mix, then add the egg and finally the milk and mix to a soft and firm dough. Rest in the fridge for an hour.

Preheat the oven to 180C/gas mark 4 again and have ready a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Take the fig filling from the fridge, and roll into 2 long cylinders about 2cm in diameter.

Take the dough out of the fridge. Roll it out on a floured surface to 3mm thick, then cut it into 2 rectangular strips the same length as the cylinders of filling and about 8cm wide. Place a cylinder of filling in the centre of each rectangle, roll up and press the edges to seal.

Cut each roll into 2cm pieces, place them on the lined baking sheet, seam side downwards, and brush with the beaten egg yolks. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the biscuits are golden brown. Serve either hot or cold.

*Recipe extracted from Giorgio Locatelli's 'Made in Sicily', published by 4th Estate*

# Denmark

## RIS À L'AMANDE MED KIRSEBÆRSAUCE - CREAMED RICE PUDDING WITH WARM CHERRY SAUCE

*Include a single whole almond in the rice pudding - the person who finds it should receive a gift, usually a box of fancy chocolates. Most people buy the cherry sauce (try Fynbo Cherry Sauce), but the recipe is included below.*

## INGREDIENTS

For the rice pudding (ideally, make it the day before):

- » 300ml water
- » 180g pudding rice
- » 1 l whole milk

To assemble:

- » 100g blanched almonds
- » seeds from two vanilla pods
- » 4 tbsp sugar
- » 250ml whipping cream

For the cherry sauce:

- » 100ml cherry juice (from the jars of cherries)
- » 1 tbsp potato flour or cornflour
- » 2 tbsp caster sugar
- » 2 x 300-350g jars of Morello cherries in juice

## METHOD

For the rice pudding, put the water in a thick-bottomed saucepan and add the rice. Bring to the boil and cook for about 2 minutes.

Turn down the heat to low and add the milk. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Cover the pan and simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Once rice is cooked, take the rice pudding off the heat and let it cool completely and place in the fridge to chill, ideally overnight.

The next day, assemble the dish. Chop the almonds into chunky pieces, apart from one, which should be kept whole. Add the vanilla seeds, sugar and chopped almonds to the cold rice pudding, and stir.

In a separate bowl, lightly whip the cream and fold it into the rice pudding. Finally, add the whole almond. Chill until serving with warm cherry sauce.

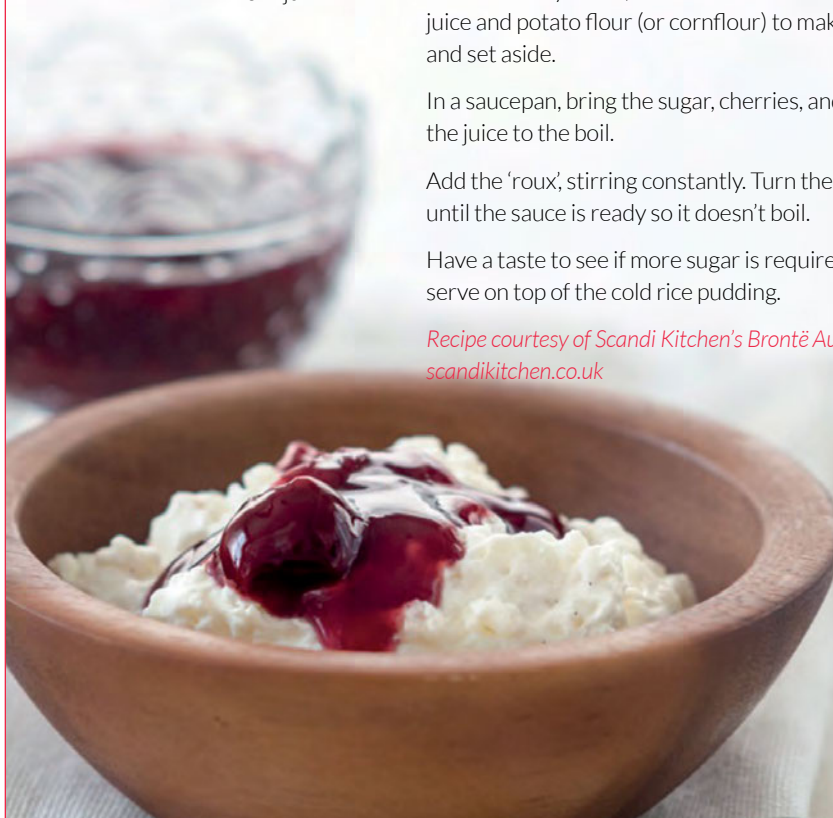
For the cherry sauce, combine a small amount of the juice and potato flour (or cornflour) to make a 'roux', and set aside.

In a saucepan, bring the sugar, cherries, and the rest of the juice to the boil.

Add the 'roux', stirring constantly. Turn the heat to low until the sauce is ready so it doesn't boil.

Have a taste to see if more sugar is required, then serve on top of the cold rice pudding.

*Recipe courtesy of Scandi Kitchen's Brontë Aurell  
[scandikitchen.co.uk](http://scandikitchen.co.uk)*





# South Africa

## SPICED BRANDY PUDDING

Serves 4-5

### INGREDIENTS

For the pudding:

- » 130g dried dates
- » 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- » 200ml boiling water
- » 120g butter
- » 150g caster sugar
- » 1 large egg
- » 150g flour
- » 1 tsp baking powder
- » ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- » ½ tsp ground ginger

For the syrup:

- » 250g sugar
- » 200ml water
- » 1 tsp butter
- » 1 tsp vanilla extract
- » 125ml cup brandy

To serve (optional):

- » Cape gooseberries/physalis
- » 1 shot Amarula cream liqueur per person

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 180C.

For the pudding, break up the dates in a large bowl, and add bicarbonate of soda and boiling water. Set aside to cool.

Cream the butter and sugar, add egg, and beat well. Add the date mixture, flour and baking powder, and stir to combine.

Pour the pudding mixture into a large flan dish. Bake for 25-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the syrup. Put the sugar and water in a pan and fast-boil for 5 minutes, then remove from heat and add the butter, vanilla and brandy.

Pour the sauce over the hot cake as soon as it comes out of the oven.

Serve hot or cold, with the Amarula cream liqueur and icing sugar-dusted Cape gooseberries, if desired.

*Recipe courtesy of Stephen Boucher, executive chef at Shaka Zulu [shaka-zulu.com](http://shaka-zulu.com)*



# Germany

## STOLLEN

A stollen can be a thing of beauty, boozy and moist - but it is so often found commercially as a stale slab; a slap in the face to anyone demanding that comforting Christmas taste. My recipe promises knockout flavours; whether at breakfast, brunch or enjoyed with mulled wine in the snow.

Serves 6-8

### INGREDIENTS

For the dough:

- » 250g wholemeal flour
- » 250g white flour
- » 12g salt
- » 125g demerara sugar
- » 30g fresh yeast
- » 6 eggs
- » 300g butter, cut into small cubes

For the syrup:

- » 250g caster sugar
- » 250g water
- » 200ml rum
- » ½ a cinnamon stick
- » 1 vanilla pod, split in half
- » 5 cloves
- » 1 orange, zest and juice

- » ¼ tsp nutmeg, grated
- » 2 star anise

For the fruits and nuts:

- » 50g golden raisins
- » 50g black raisins
- » 50g dried cranberries
- » 50g dried dates, chopped small
- » 50g flaked almonds

For the marzipan:

- » 250g ground almonds
- » 250g muscovado sugar
- » 1 egg

To assemble:

- » 1 egg, lightly beaten







## METHOD

For the dough, mix the flours, salt and sugar in a mixer with a dough hook and then add the yeast. Add the whole eggs one by one and, when a firm dough is starting to come together, add the butter little by little until it is all incorporated and a smooth dough is formed. Set aside in a warm place and allow to prove for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

Whilst the dough is proving, make the syrup.

For the syrup, bring all of the syrup ingredients to a boil, whisk and allow to infuse for 10 minutes before passing it through a sieve.

Mix the dried fruits and nuts in a bowl and pour the syrup over the top. Set aside and allow them to plump up in the liquid.

For the marzipan, beat together the ground almonds, sugar, and egg. It will be darker than normal because of the sugar type, but it will be absolutely delicious!

After the dough has proved, drain the fruits and nuts (retaining the syrup in a bowl) and thoroughly mix them into the dough, kneading well to 'knock it back' in the process.

Flour a work surface and roll the dough into a rectangle that's twice as long as it is wide.

Form the marzipan into a long sausage the same length as the rectangle of dough.

Roll the dough and marzipan up, Swiss roll-style.

Place the loaf on a tray lined with silicon paper and allow to prove in a warm place under a tea towel for 1 – 1 ½ hours, until doubled in size.

Preheat your oven to 175C.

When the stollen has proved, brush with the beaten egg and bake for 35-45 minutes until dark golden and cooked through.

Whilst still hot, brush with the reserved, rum-infused syrup until it has all been absorbed. Add more rum where required!

Slice thickly and eat the same day - although the syrup and sticky marzipan will give it a shelf life of a good 3 days, nothing is better than a freshly-baked stollen for breakfast!

*Recipe courtesy of chef Sven-Hanson Britt*



## INGREDIENTS

- » 100g unsalted butter, softened
- » 125g ground almonds
- » 2 sheets ready-rolled all-butter puff pastry
- » 125g caster sugar
- » 25g almond flakes
- » 1 lucky charm of your choice
- » 2 eggs
- » 1 egg yolk

## METHOD

Preheat the oven to 210C.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the softened butter and the sugar until light and fluffy, then add the eggs, one at a time, and mix. Add the ground and flaked almonds, and mix well.

Spread out the rolled puff pastry sheets and, using a 25cm cake tin or plate as a template, cut out 2 disks.

Place the first disk on a lined baking sheet, and wet the edges of the pastry with a damp pastry brush.

Spread the almond cream mixture over the pastry, leaving a 2cm border all the way around the edge.

Put the lucky charm on top of the almond cream, near to the edge so that you won't cut into it when you slice the galette.

Fold the second pastry disk into quarters and lift on top of the filling, unfolding to enclose the almond cream. Seal the edges by pinching the disks together.

With a knife, gently prick the center of the galette to help the steam escape during baking. Carefully mark out a pattern of wavy lines or another design on the pastry top.

In a small bowl, whisk the egg yolk with a drop of water. Brush the egg yolk on the centre of the decorated galette - but avoid the edges as otherwise it won't rise properly.

Put the galette in the oven, reduce the temperature to 180C, and bake for 35 minutes.

Allow the galette to cool down, then slice and serve. The tradition is that the youngest guest hides under the table and chooses the recipient of each slice at random!

*Recipe and image courtesy of Cindy Robert, pastry chef and owner of Petit Gâteau [petitgateau.co.uk](http://petitgateau.co.uk)*



# Britain

## CHRISTMAS PUDDING

*The fruit for this pudding needs to be prepared a day ahead of steaming.*

Serves 8

### INGREDIENTS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| » 60g mixed dried apricots and dried figs    | » 20g blanched almonds                 |
| » 1 lemon                                    | » 85g soft dark brown sugar            |
| » 50g raisins                                | » ½ tbsp treacle                       |
| » 30g currants                               | » 1 small egg, at room temperature     |
| » 50g sultanas                               | » 30g self-raising flour               |
| » 20g chopped mixed peel                     | » ¼ tsp ground mixed spice             |
| » 75ml brown ale                             | » pinch of ground cinnamon             |
| » ½ tbsp rum                                 | » small pinch of freshly grated nutmeg |
| » 1 teabag                                   | » small pinch of ground ginger         |
| » 30g prunes                                 | » small pinch of salt                  |
| » 60g butter, softened, plus extra to grease | » 60g fresh white breadcrumbs          |
| » ½ small dessert apple                      |  |

### METHOD

Roughly chop the apricots and figs. Finely grate the zest from the lemon, then squeeze the juice from half the lemon. Put the raisins, currants, sultanas and mixed peel into a bowl and add the ale, rum and lemon zest and juice. Cover and leave to soak overnight. Make a pot of tea with the teabag and leave to cool. Put the prunes in a separate bowl, pour over the cold tea and leave to soak overnight.

When ready to steam the pudding, grease a 1 litre pudding basin with butter. Prepare the saucepan for steaming and the cover for the pudding.

Drain the prunes, discarding the tea, then coarsely chop them and add to the fruit and beer. Grate the unpeeled apple and finely chop the almonds.

Put the butter and sugar into a large bowl and cream together until pale and fluffy. Stir in the treacle.

Beat the egg and gradually add to the creamed butter and sugar, beating well after each addition.

Sift the flour, spices and salt together over the mixture. Add the breadcrumbs and fold in with a large spoon. Stir in the nuts, dried fruit and soaking liquor.

Spoon the mixture into the buttered pudding basin and level the surface. Cover with the greaseproof paper and foil and secure under the rim, leaving a string handle to make it easier to lift the pudding

Place the pudding basin on the trivet in the steamer and pour in enough boiling water to come at least halfway up the sides of the basin (not touching the foil). Place the pan over a medium heat and ensure the water is bubbling gently, but still not coming into contact with the foil.

Put the lid on the pan and steam the pudding for 8 hours, checking the water level in the saucepan frequently and topping up with hot water to ensure it doesn't burn dry.

After 8 hours, lift the pudding carefully out of the steamer and remove the string and greaseproof paper cover. Wearing oven gloves, invert a serving dish over the bowl and turn both over together. Give the pudding basin a sharp shake, which should release the pudding, and carefully remove the basin. Serve the Christmas pudding with brandy butter or custard.

*Recipe extracted from 'Leiths How to Cook', published by Quadrille*







Goa

## ALLE BELLE

Makes approximately 8 pancakes (depending on size)

### INGREDIENTS

For the pancakes:

- » 1 tbsp unsalted butter or ghee, melted
- » 200g plain flour
- » 1 tbsp caster sugar
- » salt
- » 150ml coconut milk
- » few drops vanilla extract
- » ½ tsp grated lemon zest
- » cold water (if required)

For the filling:

- » 12 tbsp freshly-grated coconut (or desiccated, soaked in water before use)
- » 1 tbsp sultanas
- » 75g jaggery, palm sugar, or molasses
- » ¼ tsp ground cardamom
- » ¼ tsp ground nutmeg

### METHOD

For the pancakes, mix the melted butter or ghee into the flour with the sugar and a pinch of salt.

Add the coconut milk, vanilla and lemon zest and mix well to a smooth batter with the consistency of single cream, adding a little cold water if necessary to thin the batter. Allow to rest for 30 minutes.

Heat a little butter or ghee in a medium frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add about 3 tbsp batter to the pan and swirl to make a thin layer. Fry until just set, flip, and fry until nicely browned.

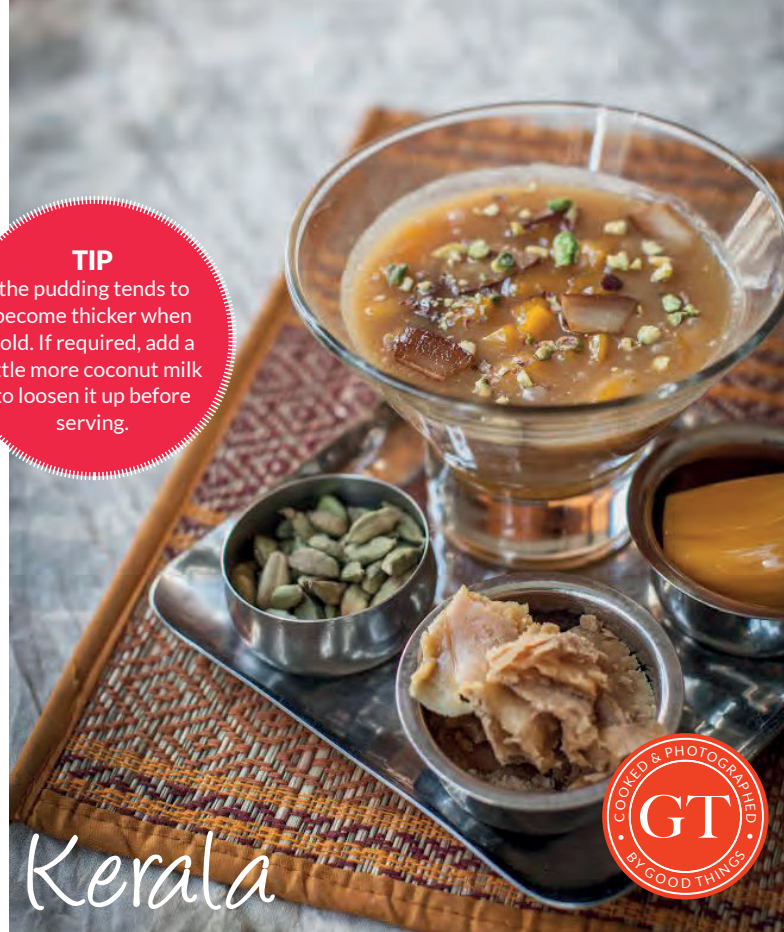
Repeat until the batter is used up, keeping the cooked pancakes warm in the oven.

For the filling, mix all the filling ingredients well and divide equally amongst the warm pancakes.

To serve, roll the pancakes around the stuffing and brush with a little melted butter or ghee. Eat hot as they are, or with custard, cream or ice cream.

Recipe courtesy of Cyrus Todiwala, chef-patron at Café Spice  
Namaste cafespice.co.uk

**TIP**  
the pudding tends to become thicker when cold. If required, add a little more coconut milk to loosen it up before serving.



Kerala

## CHAKKA PRADAMAN - JACKFRUIT, JAGGERY AND COCONUT MILK DESSERT

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

For the syrup:

- » 100g jaggery, grated (or substitute the same quantity of palm sugar or muscovado)
- » 50ml water
- » 2 whole green cardamom pods, lightly crushed

For the jackfruit:

- » 6 pieces of canned ripe jackfruit, chopped
- » 100ml water
- » pinch of salt
- » 250ml coconut milk

For the garnish:

- » 1-2 tbsp ghee
- » 10g fresh coconut slivers
- » 20g mixed cashews, pistachios, almonds (or choose your favourite), crushed

### METHOD

Put the grated jaggery, water, and cardamoms in a shallow saucepan and cook over a low heat until the jaggery melts completely and the mixture forms a light syrup. Strain the syrup into a bowl and reserve until required.

Add the jackfruit pieces to the same pan used for the jaggery syrup, add water and salt, and cook over a medium heat for about 5 minutes just until the jackfruit softens and loses its strong 'raw' smell.

When most of the water has evaporated, gradually add the jaggery syrup and coconut milk to the jackfruit, alternating between the two, until you reach the perfect balance of sweetness and creaminess.

As it cooks, the pudding will start to resemble a glossy caramel sauce - once you see it start thickening up and coating the back of your spoon, remove the pan from the heat.

To garnish, melt the ghee in a pan and gently fry the fresh coconut slivers and crushed nuts of your choice until golden-brown. Sprinkle on top of the pudding and serve hot, warm or cold.

Recipe courtesy of Kanthi Thamma, head chef at Curry Leaf Cafe (see 'Team favourites', page 26, for our review) [curryleafcafe.com](http://curryleafcafe.com)

© Emma Gutteridge



# Mauritius

## GÂTEAU PATATE - SWEET POTATO CAKES

Makes 20

### INGREDIENTS

For the dough:

- » 1kg sweet potatoes, peeled
- » 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- » 250g plain flour

For the filling:

- » 250g grated coconut
- » 250g white sugar
- » vegetable oil, to deep-fry

### METHOD

Boil the potatoes until just tender and cooked through, then mash smoothly in a bowl.

Sprinkle the fennel seeds in, then mix in the flour bit by bit to form a dough that's on the sticky side rather than dry.

Roll out the dough fairly thinly, and cut out 12cm circles using a pastry cutter, dusting with a little flour if they become difficult to handle.

In a bowl, mix together the grated coconut and sugar.

Put a tablespoon or so of the coconut/sugar mixture onto the centre of each dough circle and close it carefully into a semicircle - sealing all the sides by pressing down gently with the tines of a fork gently. Be careful not to put too much filling in, or the casing could burst during cooking.

Deep-fry each sweet potato cake in oil until golden brown, then take out and drain on kitchen paper. It's best to eat these straight away, but be careful as the filling may be hot!

*Recipe courtesy of Selina Periampillai, founder of Taste Mauritius [tastemauritius.com](http://tastemauritius.com)*



© Sarah Cuttle

## HONEY AND WALNUT - 'THREE-BITES' PIES

*The first recorded recipe for pie was from Ancient Egypt, around 9500BC. The pastry was made with wheat, oats, barley and rye, filled with honey and cooked over hot coals. Next, the Greeks borrowed the recipe and popped in nuts and fruit, bringing me to my little honey pie recipe. This pastry is chunky and wholesome enough to stand up to the rich honey filling. Devour warm or cold in three bites.*

Makes 18 mini pies

### INGREDIENTS

- » 2 x 12-hole non-stick patty tins
- » 8.5cm-round pasty or biscuit cutter
- » 5cm-round pastry or biscuit cutter

For the chunky pastry:

- » 50g rolled oats
- » 170g plain flour, plus extra to dust
- » 100g wholemeal flour
- » 160g butter, cubed
- » 2 tbsp sugar
- » 1 egg, whisked with 2 tsp water
- » 1 egg, whisked with 1 tsp cold water, for glazing

For the filling:

- » 250g runny honey
- » zest of ½ a lemon
- » ground cinnamon
- » 18 walnut halves

### METHOD

First make the pastry. Tip the oats and flours into a large bowl and mix well. Add the cubed butter and rub it into the dry ingredients, until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. This pastry will be heavier than other pastry because of the oats.

Now add the sugar, mix well, then add the whisked egg and bind together until a dough forms. Wrap the pastry in cling film and cool in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Once your pastry has chilled, preheat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

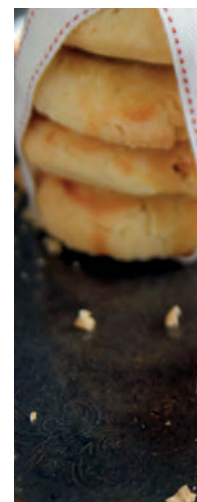
Roll out the chilled pastry on a floured surface to the thickness of a pound coin (about 2mm). Take the larger cutter and cut out 18 circles. Line your patty tins with them, leaving a slight pastry overhang for each pie.

Drizzle honey into each pastry shell (but don't over-fill them or your pies may burn). Sprinkle lemon zest and a pinch of cinnamon into each shell and place 1 walnut half in each one, to give your pies a little surprise crunch.

Roll out the remainder of the pastry until it is wafer thin, and use the smaller cutters to cut out your lids. Egg-wash the edges, top your mini pies and pinch to seal. Make a little hole in each pie lid to let the steam escape as it cooks. Egg-wash the tops.

Bake for 15 minutes (no more as they can easily burst and burn). Cool on a wire rack. Wonderful.

*Recipe extracted from 'The Little Book of Pies' by Marika Gauci, published by Square Peg*





# Vienna

## WIENER BUSSERL – ‘VIENNESE KISS’ COOKIES

Makes approximately 30

### INGREDIENTS

- » 150g butter
- » 65g sugar
- » 4g vanilla extract
- » 2 egg yolks
- » 160g flour
- » 100g jam – strawberry, cherry or redcurrant
- » a little cream and egg yolk, to glaze

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 150-160C.

Beat the butter with the sugar and vanilla extract until fluffy. Add the egg yolks and beat again. Add the flour and use a beater to combine into a smooth dough.

Rest the dough in a cool place for about 30 minutes.

Use your hands to form little balls with the dough – work quickly, as the dough is soft. Press a slight hollow into the middle of each ball using a wooden spoon handle and fill with jam.

Mix a little cream and egg yolk together, and use to lightly brush the edges of the balls.

Place the wiener busserl on a baking tray covered with silicon paper. Leave some distance between them as they will still rise a bit.

Bake for about 15 minutes, or until golden brown.

*Recipe courtesy of The Delaunay  
thedelaunay.com*



# Italy

## PANETTONE

Makes 1

### INGREDIENTS

- » 350g '00' flour mixed with 150g plain flour
- » 1 tbsp malt
- » 12g fresh yeast
- » 60 ml full-fat milk
- » 4 whole eggs
- » 160g sugar
- » 200g butter, softened
- » 3 egg yolks
- » 5g salt
- » 1 lemon, zest only
- » 1 orange, zest only
- » 40g candied orange peel
- » 40g candied lemon peel
- » 120g sultanas

### METHOD

In a large mixing bowl, combine 100g of the blended flours, the malt, 10g of the yeast, and the milk to form a smooth dough. Cover, and leave to prove for 1 hour.

Once proved, add 2 of the whole eggs, the remaining yeast, 180g of the blended flours, 60g of the sugar, and 60g of the butter. Mix the dough well, and let it prove for 2 hours.

After the second proving, add the remaining whole eggs, the egg yolks, the salt, the zest, the candied peel, and the sultanas to the dough.

Add the remaining butter, half at a time, incorporating well into the dough between additions.

Shape into a loaf and leave to prove for a final time for 2 hours.

30 minutes before cooking, preheat the oven to 200C.

Bake the panettone for 15 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 180C and bake for a further 40 minutes.

When cooked, remove from the oven and cool on an oven rack.

Serve warm or at room temperature, cut into generous wedges.

*Recipe courtesy of Carlo Scotto, head chef at Babbo babborestaurant.co.uk*

**TIP**  
Delicious served toasted and buttered.

## TONY SINGH'S SPICED BUTTERED RUM

*This moreish drink makes a change from mulled wine, and will warm the cockles of your heart. If you want to avoid becoming too inebriated before a meal, you can bring the rum to the boil before mixing it; this will remove the alcohol while retaining the lovely spiced deepness that this drink brings.*

Serves 8-10

### INGREDIENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| » 80g (3oz) demerara sugar                    | » ½ tsp ground cardamom                         |
| » 570ml (1 pint) dark rum                     | » (about 12 cardamom pods, seeds finely ground) |
| » 10 cinnamon sticks, for stirring the drinks | » ½ tsp ground nutmeg                           |
| For the spiced butter:                        |   |
| » 150g (5oz) unsalted butter, softened        | » 1 vanilla pod, use scraped seeds only         |
| » 80g (3oz) demerara sugar                    | » tiny pinch of ground cloves (optional)        |

### METHOD

To make the spiced butter, place all the ingredients into a large bowl and beat together until light and fluffy. Transfer the butter mix into a serving bowl and place somewhere cool but not in the fridge; if the fridge is your only cool place, before serving take the butter mix out in time to soften enough to spoon out of the bowl.

When you're ready to serve the drink, boil 570ml (1 pint) of water and stir in the sugar to dissolve. Warm the rum in a pan; do not let it get too hot unless you want to lower the alcohol content or it will start to burn off (this will happen even before the boil). Do take care at this stage too; if the rum gets too hot then there is a risk of it catching fire.

Pour the boiled water and sugar mix into the hot rum, then pour into glasses or mugs and pop a cinnamon stick into each one. Let people add their own spiced butter and stir it into the rum with the cinnamon sticks.

*Recipe extracted from 'The Incredible Spice Men' by Cyrus Todiwala and Tony Singh, published by BBC Books*






# My Thai

**Nicky Clarke** steps off the beach into Thailand's dining rooms and kitchens - and discovers a country that tastes every bit as good as it looks





Backpacking has become synonymous with Thailand— but beneath the shoddy reputation that ill-behaved students have seeded lies a sprawling, first-class country. Its shimmering core rivals Europe's capital cities and its vastly different regions abound with colour, texture and flavour.

## BANGKOK

From super-stays through to Michelin-starred restaurants, rooftop bars and hot young chefs - there's luxury to be found through the traffic-choked streets of Bangkok... and great street eats.

### The high and mighty

At number 13 in this year's World's 50 Best Restaurants there's nothing unlucky about Nahm at the swanky Metropolitan ([comohotels.com/metropolitanbangkok](http://comohotels.com/metropolitanbangkok)). Aussie chef David Thompson's food is inspired by the ancient city of Ayutthaya and centuries-old cookbooks, and Nahm completely redefines the hotel restaurant with a focus on the interplay between hot and sour, sweet and salty. Try the steamed coral trout with bang rak yellow beans and pickled garlic or guinea fowl curry with shampoo ginger and holy basil. Jude Sangsida, former chef of the Thai royal family and now executive chef at London group Busaba Eathai ([busaba.com](http://busaba.com)), is a fan: 'Everyone in Bangkok goes to Nahm and for good reason - it's fantastic. Another great place is Bo.lan ([bolan.co.th](http://bolan.co.th)), a beautifully-designed restaurant tucked away on the back streets.' There, Thai-born Duangporn Songvisava and Australian Dylan Jones marry the country's fiery street food with its more refined, palace-style cooking. Sangsida recommends the degustation menu.

### Other elevated eats

**1. Sirocco & Sky Bar at Lebua** ([lebua.com/sky-bar](http://lebua.com/sky-bar)) is the world's highest open-air restaurant and bar 820ft above the streets on the 63rd floor. After an award-winning dinner at Sirocco, mere steps away, sip Sky Cosmos and soak up the electrifying, 360-degree views from Sky Bar.

**2. Vertigo & Moon Bar at Banyan Tree** ([banyantree.com](http://banyantree.com)) are where seriously sumptuous steaks and sophisticated sips can be enjoyed: enjoy slabs of melt-in-the-mouth steaks with one too many Vertigo Sunsets on the 63rd floor.

### The down and dirty

Khao San Road is thronging with tourists for good reason: it has some of the best street food stalls in the world. From soups to sukhothai, pad Thai to som tam, there are cheap eats of every kind on offer. For something unusual, seek out the lesser-known mee phat krachet: a mighty mix of rice strands, water mimosa and squid rings, seasoned with oil-black fish sauce and studded with garlic and chilli for signature Thai fire. Busaba Eathai's Jude Sangsida recommends Chatuchak Market — the world's latest open-air one — for diverse street eats. Alternatively, he says, there is also the soul food in the Thong Lor district.

### The culture vulture

If you're not bowled over by the imposing, colonial-style mansion inside which the Blue Elephant ([blueelephant.com](http://blueelephant.com)) is housed, then you certainly will be by the cookery classes that take place inside. Opt for 'Serve The Chef', where students can pitch in with ideas for the menu, for serious learning under pressure. A Thai takeaway in the truest sense.

### The stay

Small but perfectly-formed, The Eugenia ([theeugenia.com](http://theeugenia.com)) envelopes guests in chic colonial comfort with four-posters in the bedrooms, animal heads on the wall and staff in Victorian get-up.





© Getty

## KOH SAMUI

There are only so many times you can pull up a pew at Ark Bar ([ark-bar](#)) or Green Mango ([thegreenmangoclub.com](#)) and down bucket after bucket of Sam Song rum. Beyond the DJ booth and past the palms lies a culinary culture that goes beyond the carb cravings of post-Full Moon carnage.

### The high and mighty

Dining on the Rocks at Six Senses ([sixsenses.com](#)) is a far cry from some of the dive bars in Chaweng: made up of a series of five wooden platforms built into the side of a cliff, it could rely on the views alone. But it doesn't and the various tasting menus – 'new Asian with a crossover accent' – are a triumph with an emphasis on textures, aromas and temperature combinations: playful dishes include a tinned tuna sandwich, a 'hot dog' with ketchup caviar, and a wildly different take on peanut butter and jelly. Also highly-regarded on the island is Zazen Restaurant ([samuizazen.com](#)), where chef Jean-Francois crafts Asian fare with a French twist to great acclaim. Close to the famed Fisherman's Village of Bophut, dishes come with a seafood slant: crispy fried soft-shell crab with sesame and spicy tamarind; stir-fried sea scallops with asparagus. Call ahead and enjoy from the comfort of your own private Thai Sala right on the beach.

### The stay

If you hop into just one bed in Koh Samui, make it a fine-thread count one at The Library ([thelibrary.co.th](#)): the swimming pool — lined with blood-red tiles — has been voted one of the best in the world.

### Koh Yao Noi

This beachside boutique beauty offers a beautiful buffet dinner; keep an eye on your yacht with a table on the Seafood Terrace amongst swaying palms.

### Koh Khai Nui

On the plushiest private island in Phuket, cocktails at Chokdee are as chic as you'd imagine; the perfect precursor to the signature steamed white snapper.

### Koh Phi Phi

It's not all party, party on Phi Phi; the food, service and atmosphere at Ciao Bella make it a hot spot for daters and diners. Book one of the bungalows round the back for a seamless sand-to-sheets sleep.

### Railay Beach

A leisurely lunch inevitably transforms into sunset cocktails at The Grotto; secreted away under an ancient limestone cliff at the Rayavadee resort, it's worth mooring up for.



## CHIANG MAI

370 miles north of Bangkok and 1,000 feet above sea level, Chiang Mai is the cultural heart of Thailand and is deservedly known as its second city. Between a tribal trek and a slog around its legendary night market, there's plenty to enjoy.

### The high and mighty

The top table in Chiang Mai is Terraces at the plush Four Seasons. The hotel restaurant has a stunning open-air setting with sweeping views, and a menu jam-packed with the region's natural produce: try seared Andaman sea bass fillet topped with sea scallops and cauliflower mousse.

### The down and dirty

Slurp up a piquant bowl of khao soi – curry broth topped with crispy-fried noodles and served with chicken or beef, pickled cabbage, shallots and a wedge of zesty lime. It's classic Chiang Mai. Try the dish along Charoenrat Road.

### The stay

Lie in luxe at The Chedi (ghmhotels.com), housed in the former British Consulate building on the banks of the Mae Ping River.



## ISLE BE THERE

A trip to Thailand wouldn't be complete without taking to the water. Hire something slick from Yachts & Friends yachtsandfriends.com. The 43ft Bavaria 45 is easy to handle and even easier on the eye; the perfect hire for food-filled days spent island-hopping.

## NORTHERN STAR

Saiphin Moore, head chef and co-owner of Rosa's Thai Café in London (rosaslondon.com), hails from northern Thailand. Saiphin reveals more about the food and recipes that inspired her restaurant business – which now has six venues across the capital.

**Your first business was opening a grocery store and then a restaurant in Phetchabun while you were still at school. What is that area and its food like?**

'Petchabun is in the north of Thailand (just over 200 miles from Chiang Mai) and the place I am from is up in the hillsides, called Khoa Kho. It is a lush and beautiful part of the country. In terms of food there is a huge variety of noodle-based dishes. I opened a noodle shop which served lots of local noodle soups such as Yentafo (a bright pink soup due to the red bean curd used) and BBQ pork soup with egg noodles. I serve the Yentafo soup at the restaurants now and it's hugely popular. At the back of the noodle store I also ran a grocery shop.'

**You then moved to London by way of Hong Kong to open Rosa's Thai Café. Did both of those cities inspire what you currently serve?**

'Both cities have had a huge influence on the Rosa's you see today, but Hong Kong has had a bigger culinary influence. I brought a lot of the recipes I served in my restaurant in Hong Kong over to London too, such as the fresh summer rolls. They were my best seller in Hong Kong, and they are one of my best-sellers in London too!'

**People are often afraid of cooking Thai at home because of the unknown. What is something simple that people can cook quickly and easily after a day at work to get a true taste of Thai food?**

'If people want a quick, cheap and easy dinner then I have two dishes that spring to mind. An omelette – a real Thai favourite, made so easily, as there are normally always eggs in the house. All you need to do is raid the fridge for vegetables or herbs you can add. With a dash of soy or fish sauce, you can whip up a tasty dinner in no time.

'Another favourite of mine is pad kra prow, a quick and easy stir-fry made with whatever leftover meat you have in the fridge. Simply add basil, garlic and onion to a hot pan, stir-fry for a 30 seconds, then add the meat. Season with soy and oyster sauce, a dash of sugar and you're good to go.'

*Saiphin Moore's first cookbook, 'Rosa's Thai Café: The Cookbook,' will be published by Octopus in spring 2015.*





**TIP**

This dish is great with a side of hot grilled flatbreads - perfect for mopping up any leftover curry sauce.



## SAIPHIN MOORE'S YELLOW LAMB CURRY

*Thai people don't usually eat lamb. It has an aroma they aren't familiar with, and so it is something of a rarity in Thai food. I love it, though. And because it's a common ingredient in Britain, I decided to try a twist on a yellow curry. I have to say, it tastes fabulous. And it's a unique dish that you won't get anywhere else. The trick with this curry is to keep it thick; so don't add water.*

Serves 2

### INGREDIENTS

- » 4 lamb cutlets
- For the curry:
- » 250ml coconut milk
- » 1 ½ tsp fish sauce
- » 1 ½ tsp palm sugar
- » 1 ½ tbsp yellow curry paste
- » 2 bell chillies (optional), sliced on the diagonal
- To finish:
- » fresh coriander, chopped
- To serve:
- » mixed steamed vegetables

### METHOD

Preheat the grill to high. Clean the lamb cutlets and grill according to your preference. Remove from the grill and keep the cutlets warm until ready to serve.

Bring 50ml of the coconut milk to the boil over a medium heat, then add the fish sauce, palm sugar, and yellow curry paste, and cook until the oil splits and rises to the surface.

Add the remaining coconut milk and continue cooking for 5 minutes. The taste should be slightly salty. If you want it to be spicy, add the bell chillies. When it comes to the boil, the curry is ready to serve.

Put the lamb cutlets on a serving plate, pour over the curry sauce, garnish with coriander leaves, and serve with the mixed vegetables.

*Recipe courtesy of Saiphin Moore, head chef and co-owner, Rosa's Thai Café [rosaslondon.com](http://rosaslondon.com)*



## DAVID THOMPSON'S ROAST DUCK, SHIITAKE MUSHROOM AND YOUNG COCONUT SOUP WITH THAI BASIL

### INGREDIENTS

For the duck soup base:

- » bones from ½ an Asian roast duck (Good Things tip: or use the carcass of a roast chicken)
- » ½ cup shiitake mushroom stalks
- » bunch fresh Thai basil stalks
- » ½ head of garlic
- » 1 hand ginger, peeled
- » 1 long white radish, peeled and sliced
- » ½ a Chinese cabbage
- » 1 whole star anise
- » 2 tbsp deep-fried garlic
- » 3 l chicken stock

For each serving of soup:

- » 250ml prepared duck stock
- » 1 large fresh shiitake mushroom, sliced

- » salt, to taste
- » 1 tsp light soy sauce
- » 1 tsp oyster sauce
- » pinch of palm sugar
- » pinch of white pepper
- » pinch of minced deep-fried garlic
- » 65ml young coconut water
- » large pinch of Thai basil leaves
- » 4 slices young coconut flesh
- » 4 slices roast duck meat

To finish:

- » 1 tbsp chopped spring onions
- » a little freshly-ground white pepper
- » dash of roasted sesame oil

### METHOD

For the soup base, place all the ingredients in a pot and cover with the chicken stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for 2 hours, skimming constantly. Strain and set aside.

For the soup, heat the prepared stock and add the sliced mushrooms. Season with salt, soy sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, and pepper, and add the deep-fried garlic.

Add the young coconut water and Thai basil leaves. It should taste salty, rich and sweet from coconut water.

Place the young coconut flesh and duck meat in the bowl, and pour over the soup. Sprinkle with spring onions, pepper and sesame oil.

*Recipe courtesy of David Thompson*



## JUDE SANGSIDA'S GREEN BEEF CURRY

Now executive chef for Busaba Eathai, a restaurant group that offers a flavoursome selection of Thai curries, stir-fries and salads, Jude Sangsida once worked under the head chef for the Thai royal family. Here, Jude shares one of their favourites, albeit a spicier version. Just the way Jude prefers it.

Serves 1

### INGREDIENTS

- » 100ml Aroy-D coconut milk
- » 50g green curry paste
- » 200g beef sirloin, sliced
- » 2 lime leaves, torn
- » 3-4 tbsp fish sauce
- » 4-5 Thai aubergines, quartered
- » 10g pea aubergines
- » 1 red chilli, sliced
- » 400ml Aroy-D coconut milk, mixed with 400ml water
- » 10-15 Thai sweet basil leaves

### METHOD

In a saucepan set over medium-high heat, bring the coconut milk to the boil. Stir until the coconut milk separates.

Add the green curry paste, and stir until the oil on the top of the mixture turns green and smells fragrant.

Add the beef and stir-fry it, then drop in the lime leaves. Add the fish sauce, followed by the Thai aubergines, pea aubergines, and chilli.

Pour in the coconut milk and water mix, stir, and simmer for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat, drop in the sweet basil leaves, and serve with jasmine rice or roti.

*Recipe courtesy of Jude Sangsida, executive chef at Busaba Eathai busaba.com*



THE  
Good Things  
GUIDE TO

# ICELANDIC FOOD

THERE'S MORE TO THE CUISINE OF  
THIS BEAUTIFUL NORDIC ISLAND  
THAN ROTTEN SHARK MEAT  
AND PUFFINS, AS KAVITA FAVELLE  
DISCOVERS AS SHE EATS HER WAY  
AROUND ICELAND



## ICELAND. WHAT IMAGE DOES IT CONJURE UP FOR YOU?

For me it's a land of a thousand alien landscapes - not just one for every day but one for every hour of your visit. Exploring the island feels like location scouting for the next series of *Doctor Who*. It's dramatic, intriguing, enchanting.

If you haven't visited, it's easy to fall back on stereotypes: Reykjavik's enduring reputation as party central; the quirky nature of Icelandic musicians such as Björk; the shocking banking collapse of the noughties; the likelihood of a volcanic eruption (after Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 and Bárðarbunga in 2014); the friendly nature of the people (ranked last year by the World Economic Forum as the world's most welcoming to foreign tourists).

What most first-time visitors are missing is an understanding of Icelandic cuisine and the local specialties to look out for.

Rest assured, there is plenty of great food to appreciate, alongside the more unusual.

## HANGIKJÖT SMOKED MEAT

Fish and meat are preserved in a number of different ways in Iceland. Hangikjöt (hung meat) is usually lamb, mutton or horsemeat dried in a smoking shed. Also often available are smoked goose, beef and occasionally puffin. Traditional hangikjöt is often boiled and served in slices with potatoes and peas. Newer 'tvíreykt' (twice-smoked) varieties are served raw in very thin slices, much like Italian prosciutto.

Many different types of fish are smoked from cod and haddock to salmon and arctic char. Also look out for smoked cod roe and liver and smoked eel.



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## HUMARSUPA AND HUMARHALA LOBSTER SOUP AND LOBSTER TAILS

When Icelanders talk about humar (lobster) they're referring to the European lobster species, *Nephrops norvegicus*, more commonly known as langoustine, scampi, Dublin Bay prawn or Norway lobster. Humarsupa (lobster soup) is a popular way to serve it.

In Reykjavik, simple seafood shack Saegreifinn (Sea Baron) is lauded for its lobster soup, a rustic dish of flavourful broth, a few remnants of celery, pepper and tomato and some well-cooked chunks of lobster meat. But the lobster soup I recommend seeking out is an altogether richer version from Fjorubordid, a restaurant in Stokkseyri on Iceland's south west coast, just 37 miles from Reykjavik.

It's not just about the soup, though. Fjorubordid's lobster offering is a very good option, cooked in spiced garlic butter and served in the pan, with an addictive sweet brown dip on the side. Use your bread to mop up the pan juices. Also worth visiting is Humarhöfnin restaurant in Hofn which grills its langoustine in butter, parsley and garlic and serves it with 'black magic' sauce.



## HARÐFISKUR

### HARD DRIED FISH

A popular snack in Iceland, white fish – such as cod, haddock, catfish or pollock – is dried and beaten into thin pieces. Traditionally, filleted fish were brined before being hung on outdoor drying racks and wind dried over several weeks. These days, modern temperature and humidity controlled refrigerators are often used.

Widely available in longlife packets, harðfiskur is eaten as it is or with salted butter. The trick, so it's said, is to allow the hard pieces to soften in your mouth before chewing.

## HVALKJÖTI

### WHALE MEAT (AND OTHER EXOTIC MEATS)

Many meats eaten in Iceland are not widely eaten elsewhere and hence seem rather exotic to visitors.

Reindeer were not introduced to the island until the late 18th century; some still live wild in eastern moorland areas. Reindeer meat is available all year round, but is an expensive delicacy.

Horse meat is commonly eaten in Iceland, enjoyed both fresh and smoked.

Waterfowl such as puffins, cormorants and gulls are rich in fish oil and often soaked or boiled in milk to extract the oil before curing or further cooking.

Probably most controversial is whale meat, which engenders strong emotions for many. Minke whales are not considered endangered and most whale meat consumed in Iceland today is from this species. Read up on the issue ahead of your visit and make up your own mind on whether to try this local speciality.

## HVERABRAUÐ AND RÚGBRAUÐ

### HOT SPRINGS BREAD

Hverabrauð (hot springs bread) is a traditional dark bread baked using the natural heat of Iceland's hot springs. A dense rye dough sweetened with molasses is placed in small ovens that are dug into the ground in areas of natural hot spring activity. The geothermal heat and steam surging up through the ground slowly bake the dough over 12 - 24 hours. The finished bread is much like German pumpernickel, but often has a subtle sulphuric taste. Hverabrauð is dense, dark, moist and sweet and particularly good with butter and smoked fish or meat.

In areas with less volcanic activity, 'rúgbrauð' (rye bread) is slow cooked in a sealed pot.

## KÆSTUR HÁKARL

### FERMENTED SHARK

Iceland was settled by immigrants from Scandinavia, an area with a rich tradition of preserving foodstuffs. Abundant fish from the waters around Iceland together with meat from domestic farm animals were preserved during the warmer months for sustenance during the cold and dark winters. In Norway, salt preservation was common but that tradition didn't last long in Iceland; a shortage of firewood precluded the quick creation of salt by boiling seawater over fire. Instead, Icelanders preserved meat by fermenting it in whey, an acidic by-product of the cheese industry.

Fermentation not only preserves the fish and meat but has a strong impact on the taste of the food, creating a strong umami-rich savoury flavour. Of Iceland's fermented fish and meat products, 'kæstur hákarl' aka 'rotten' shark is probably the best known and the most feared.

You can find it in local supermarkets, and on a few restaurant menus. But be warned – food writer and blogger MiMi Aye deems it 'the worst thing [she's] ever had in her mouth' and eloquently describes her throat contorting and constricting 'in a desperate attempt to regurgitate the chunks of fetid fish'.



© Getty

## KJÖTSÚPA

### LAMB SOUP

Norse and Viking settlers also brought livestock with them. Most of these stocks developed in isolation on the island and today, the local breeds provide superb meat and dairy products.

Icelandic lamb in particular is excellent. Modern restaurants serve delicious lamb steaks, grilled and served plainly to show off the quality and flavour. Also popular, especially in colder months, is 'kjötsúpa' - either a lamb soup or a stew, depending on how much the liquid is thickened.



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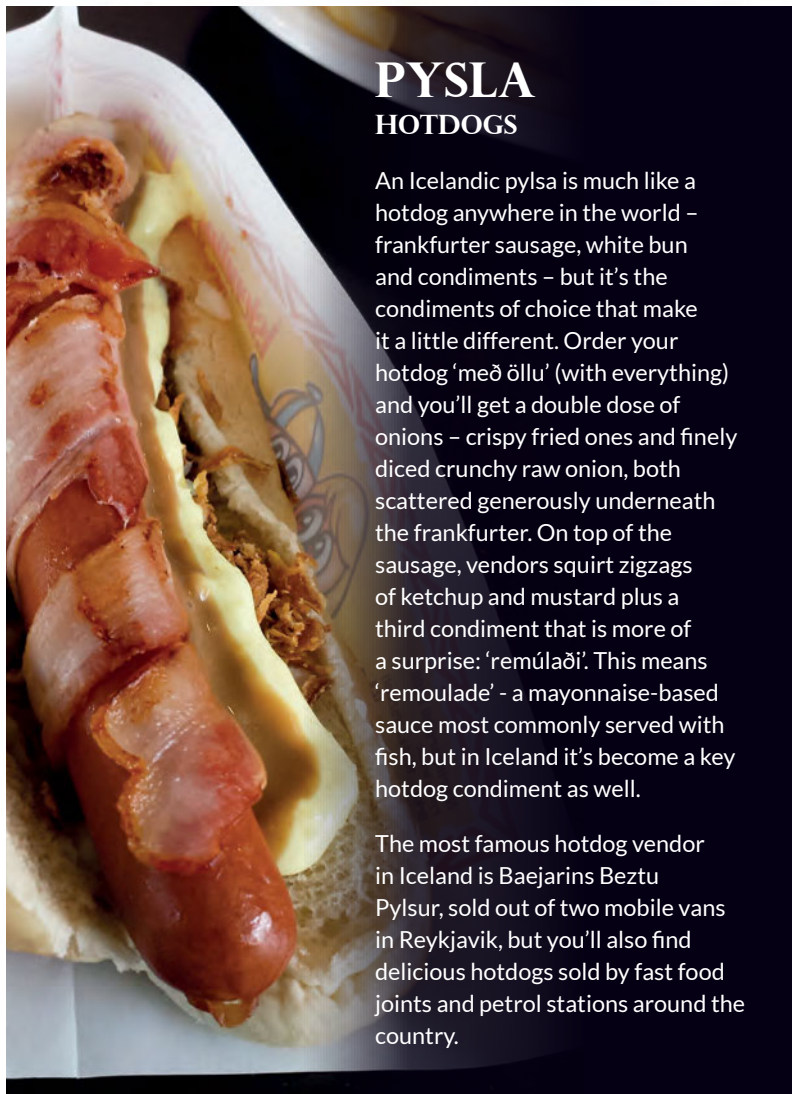
## LAKKRÍS AND MARSIPAN

### LIQUORICE AND MARZIPAN

It won't take you long to notice Iceland's liquorice fetish. Pop into any grocery store and you'll find shelf after shelf of different liquorice treats from familiar liquorice shoelaces, to liquorice toffee, chewing gum and even liquorice-flavoured chocolate bars.

Marzipan is also a much loved sweet, featuring in chocolate bars, cakes and biscuits. For the ultimate Icelandic confectionery experience, track down a bar of 'Nóa Tromp' – milk-chocolate covered liquorice filled with a sweet marzipan and coconut cream.

© Getty



© Kavita Favelle

## PYSLA

### HOTDOGS

An Icelandic pylsa is much like a hotdog anywhere in the world – frankfurter sausage, white bun and condiments – but it's the condiments of choice that make it a little different. Order your hotdog 'með öllu' (with everything) and you'll get a double dose of onions – crispy fried ones and finely diced crunchy raw onion, both scattered generously underneath the frankfurter. On top of the sausage, vendors squirt zigzags of ketchup and mustard plus a third condiment that is more of a surprise: 'remúlaði'. This means 'remoulade' – a mayonnaise-based sauce most commonly served with fish, but in Iceland it's become a key hotdog condiment as well.

The most famous hotdog vendor in Iceland is Baejarins Beztu Pylsur, sold out of two mobile vans in Reykjavik, but you'll also find delicious hotdogs sold by fast food joints and petrol stations around the country.

## SKYR

Similar in taste and texture to natural yoghurt, skyr is a cultured dairy product that has been made in Iceland for over a thousand years. It is essentially a fresh cheese; a small portion of the previous batch of skyr is added to warm skimmed milk to introduce the required bacteria, rennet is sometimes added too and the mixture is left to one side; once the milk has coagulated, it is strained through fabric to separate the solids from the whey. Like yoghurt, skyr has a slightly sour tang.

Traditionally, it is served with milk and sugar or stirred into porridge but today commercial brands sell flavours such as vanilla, berries and other fruits alongside the plain variety. It also features in local desserts such as cakes, pastries and mousses.



© Getty

## SVIÐ AND SVIÐASULTA

### SHEEP'S HEAD AND BRAWN

Only for the brave, svið is half a sheep's head, singed to remove the fur, boiled and served rather starkly on the plate. Sometimes the meat from the head is removed, formed into sviðasulta (a pressed terrine of brawn) and pickled in whey.

This austere dish arose during a time when no part of a slaughtered animal could be wasted. These days, svið is one of the key dishes in 'þorramatur', a buffet of traditional foods, often served during the mid-winter festival of Þorrablót.

If you're keen to try svið, visit the Fljótt og Gott restaurant within Reykjavik's BSI Bus Terminal.



# Local flavour

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# DINING GUIDE

Almost everyone's in a party mood from now through to the New Year, meaning many more chances to eat in the places you've been meaning to try. But don't choose in haste; peruse our definitive edit of the UK's top dining destinations before making any decisions. Along with our comprehensive countrywide guide, we've honed in on hot Caribbean restaurants in this issue. Need to find the perfect present? Turn to The Collection for festive gift inspiration – and some amazing prizes.



# NEW OPENINGS

Written by  
WILL MARTIN

## SMOKING GOAT

Smoking Goat is the hottest Thai barbecue joint in London. Created by Ben Chapman, the restaurant pools together a small, highly talented batch of Thai food gurus, including Seb Homes – the former head chef of Peckham's The Begging Bowl.

Food at Smoking Goat is prepared over smoking wood coals and flavoured with traditional spices. Dishes include whole chilli crab and slow wood-roasted duck with palm sugar, pandan and kaffir lime; cooked until the meat flakes readily, served with som tam – the classic Thai hot and sour papaya salad – and fiery, handmade 'jaew' dipping sauce.

Set in Denmark Street, aka 'Tin Pan Alley', Smoking Goat is keen to keep a late night dive bar feel by drawing upon the area's musical heritage. Expect to see a few musical aces warming up on stage as you crack open your chilli crab, and keep an eye on social media: you never know who'll be playing next!

7 Denmark Street, London WC2H 8LZ  
T: SmokingGoatSoho



## SOM SAA

Som Saa is an exciting new Thai restaurant founded by Andy Oliver – an experienced chef who, having worked in Thai kitchens for nearly a decade, has built a deep understanding of Thai cuisine and culture.

Som Saa embraces a style of shared eating that is simply the norm in rural and provincial Thailand. Dishes from the Northern and Northeastern provinces of Thailand are famous for their use of charcoal grills and wood-fired ovens. Some of the dishes include khao thort si naem – a crispy rice croquette with fermented pork, peanuts and ginger; and gaeng hung lay – a Northern-style pork curry with pickled garlic and ginger.

Classic Thai brunch dishes such as Chinese doughnuts and rice porridge with crispy pork will also be served at weekends, alongside a special Thai coffee developed in conjunction by gourmet coffee roasters Climpson & Sons.

With retro Thai decor, authentic flavours from the kitchen and memorable drinks, the experience at Som Saa promises to transport you to a small town Thailand for the night.

Climpson's Arch, London E8 3SB  
bookings@climpsonandsons.com | T: @somsaa\_london



## PANCHAMAMA

Pachamama is London's newest addition to the Peruvian restaurant scene. Drawing on the culinary diversity of Peru, the menu's backbone is underpinned by quintessential British flavours.

Inspired by the aesthetic of a faded colonial home that's been inhabited by an eccentric Peruvian family, Pachamama includes furniture from British craftsmen as well as reclaimed antiques, with a colour palate drawing on the brighter pastels of Peruvian design.

Dishes include salmon with watercress, horseradish and beetroot; whole Cornish lobster with a herbed butter sauce and truffled purple potato salad; and grilled Brussels sprouts with squash, heritage carrots, salsa criolla and shaved Berkswell. With each plate meticulously prepared and artfully arranged, basic native ingredients such as corn and plantain are brought to life on your plate.

Central to the Pachamama philosophy is the supporting of independent artisans. Fish, game and meat are supplied by Celtic Fish and Game, a small family-run business in Cornwall, and the artwork on the walls is sourced from young, budding photographers around the world.

18 Thayer Street, London W1U 3JY | 020 7935 9393  
pachamamalondon.com | T: @pachamama\_ldn  
FB: pachamamalondon



## BREW PUTNEY

Brew's fourth site is also its largest to date, located on Lower Richmond Road. Run by Jason Wells, who began his foodie career as a butcher in his native Australia, the menu at Brew Putney - like those at outposts in Wandsworth, Battersea and Wimbledon - is inspired by his travels, with particular influence coming from Israel and New York.

The huge, 3,000 square foot space will offer a delicious Antipodean-influenced menu and an all-day dining experience punctuated by live music, 'breakfasts in bed' on Bedouin-inspired nests and barbecue nights surrounded by the hot smoke of the 'barbie'.

Visit, in any weather, to enjoy a drink or two al fresco on Brew's large terrace. It features a 150-year-old gnarled olive tree, reclaimed timber decking and a fresh herb garden which yields many of the aromatics used in Brew's dishes. All lead you to half-believe you're no longer in London.



If you opt for a post-dinner drink at the inside bar, you'll find Brew's expert mixologist muddling a range of refreshing cocktails by candlelight. On the weekends, the unplugged music sessions in the early afternoon and evening offer even more of a reason to linger over that lychee martini.

162-164 Lower Richmond Road,  
London SW15 1LY | 020 8789 8287  
brew-cafe.com/LDN | T: @brew\_cafe |  
FB: BrewCafe

## ZAIKA OF KENSINGTON

After a brief absence, Kensington's much-loved Indian restaurant, Zaika, is reopening as a sister restaurant to Tamarind of Mayfair - the first Indian restaurant to ever be awarded a Michelin star.

Featuring a menu exploring North Indian Awadhi cuisine, Zaika is set in a former banking hall and retains its original architectural features like wood-panelled walls and double-height windows, offering views over Kensington Palace Gardens. Over 150 pieces of artwork adorn the walls and the 'tropics of India' are referenced by the sea of plants and fresh flowers dotted around the room.

Dishes include samudri khazana; a seafood feast consisting of Amristsari prawn, lime leaf crab cake and spice-crusted scallop; and gosht milan, featuring tawa grilled mint lamb cutlet, pulled lamb kurkure and kakori kebab.



The dessert menu is uniquely Indian-influenced, and featuring tempting items like Indian 'Old Monk' rum baba, lauki kheer (bottle gourd pudding with Madagascan vanilla apples) and richly-dense, frozen matka kulfi.

1 Kensington High Street, London W8 5NP | 0207 795 6533  
tamarindcollection.com  
T: ZaikaLondon  
FB: Zaika-of-Kensington





DINING GUIDE  
NEW OPENINGS

## SEÑOR CEVICHE

With a buzzy, open plan kitchen and funky Latin American music, Señor Ceviche is an homage to the lively streets of downtown Lima, and serves up a large slice of Peruvian attitude in the very British setting of Carnaby Street.

Inspired by his time working in Peru's top ceviche restaurant, Señor Ceviche (aka Harry Edmeades) transports hungry Londoners to the sights, sounds and tastes of the Peruvian capital. The interiors have been designed around the bohemian and artistic streets of Lima's party district, Barranco, which is home to some of Lima's most exciting bars and restaurants.

Heading up the menus are the Señor's signature ceviches, with the original sea bream and king prawn ceviche with aji amarillo tiger's milk and crispy baby squid available alongside a selection of Peruvian barbecue specials. These include the fabulous slow-cooked pork ribs with pink pickled cabbage and succulent chicken with rocoto chilli mayonnaise.

Eclectic Latin American music keeps the Peruvian spirit alive together with expertly prepared cocktails; including Señor Ceviche's famed frozen cocktails and freshly shaken pisco sours.

Kingly Court, London W1B 5PW  
020 7842 8540 | [senor-ceviche.com](http://senor-ceviche.com)  
T: @SenorCevicheLDN  
FB: Senor Ceviche

## IPPUDO

Founded in Japan in 1985, Japanese ramen specialist Ippudo's flagship European ramen restaurant is just hit London. The Ippudo chain operates over 120 stores across 13 different countries, with sites in cities like New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Sydney. All in all, Ippudo serves more than 50,000 bowls of ramen every day to hungry mouths around the world.

With nearly 30 years of history and tradition behind it, Ippudo offers an authentic menu of Hakata-style ramen. A pork-based tonkotsu broth is the foundation of Ippudo's famous ramen, made in-house by boiling pork bones for two days to achieve perfect emulsion and that famous rich and creamy flavour.

Ippudo's signature ramen, the 'shiromaru hakata classic', is an original tonkotsu ramen with homemade thin noodles, topped with pork loin chashu, sesame kikurage mushrooms, bean sprouts and spring onions. A vegetarian version is also available, made from a rich seaweed and mushroom broth topped with noodles, fried tofu and beansprouts.

The restaurant itself is furnished tastefully in black, red and white, and offers a free-standing bar where guests are welcome to stand and wait for their table while enjoying sips of sake.

5 Central St Giles Piazza, St Giles High St,  
London WC2H 8AG | [ippudo.co.uk](http://ippudo.co.uk)  
T: @IppudoLondon | FB: ippudolondon



## ROKA ALDWYCH

It's a big year for Arjun Waney and Rainer Becker's Roka micro-chain. In the spring, they opened their smallest restaurant Roka Mayfair, and now they're about to fling open the doors on their largest ever venture: Roka Aldwych.

With plenty of natural light, expect to see a Japanese bathtub with running water greeting you in the reception. There'll also be a big lounge bar in the front of the building, high communal dining at the bar as well as lounge dining and a 'robata bar'.

As for dishes, Roka Aldwych's expert pastry chefs have been playing around with ideas for an amazing cheesecake from Hokkaido in Northern Japan. It tastes like a soufflé but has a really light cheesecake flavour. The chefs are calling it 'cotton-style cheesecake'.

And since Japanese wagyu beef came onto the market in Britain, dishes like pure Japanese wagyu tartar with smoked soya sauce, wasabi and Nori crackers can now be discovered on the menu. So, for that matter, can fresh British seafood, prepared and served as Anglo-Japanese fusion dishes like langoustine and cod cheek skewers, shiso and



umeboshi. For dessert, if you can get that far, try the Hokkaido-style Japanese cheesecake with crispy apple wafer. It soothes the palate and prepares you for the fire of the Micronesia-style cocktails awaiting you at the bar.

Aldwych House, 71-91 Aldwych, London  
WC2B 4HN | 0207 294 7636  
[rokarestaurant.com](http://rokarestaurant.com)  
T: @rokaaldwych | FB: RokaLondon





## THE ARAKI

The Araki was awarded three Michelin stars at its previous location in the Ginza district of central Tokyo. But now, master sushi chef Mitsuhiro Araki has relocated from central Tokyo to London's New Burlington Street to offer nine lucky sushi lovers the chance to try his perfect sushi every night.

The Araki in London is now the only place in the world to experience Araki's world famous 'edomae' sushi (Tokyo-style, from the era when nigiri sushi was invented). Inside the restaurant, the cool, thoughtful setting is inspired by leading Japanese designer Takenaka. The wood on the counter, for instance, is a single piece of 200-year-old Japanese cypress from the Gifu prefecture. It was a gift to Mr. Araki from Japanese musical legend Ryuichi Sakamoto.

The Araki serves a fixed menu with various appetisers, focusing entirely on the highest quality edomae sushi. But it does experiment with traditional European flavours such as foie gras, caviar and truffle to create unique flavour combinations.

Guests can either opt for a wine pairing proffered by master sommelier Gearoid Devaney, or three types of sake selected personally by Araki and served in stunning kakiemon and eiraku ceramics, some of which are over 100 years old.

Araki himself said: 'Although we are nearly 6,000 miles away from the bay of Tokyo, I am excited about welcoming guests to The Araki and sharing the true edomae experience.'

Unit 4, 12 New Burlington St, London W1S 3BF | 020 3047 2368  
the-araki.com

## THE GREEK LARDER

Co-founders Theodore Kyriakou (known for launching 'Livebait' in 1995 and 'The Real Greek' in 1999) and Panos Manuelides apparently met while fishing under the temple of Poseidon.

A few years later, they decided to open The Greek Larder to jumpstart the Greek dining experience within the heart of King's Cross and St Pancras.

Cooking at The Greek Larder is light and dishes are derived from home-grown Greek cuisine, favouring traditional recipes that draw on the street food of Athens. The menu boasts favourites like grilled trahana cake with crevettes and Cretan deep-fried courgette flowers stuffed with feta and sprinkled with thyme honey, stuffed vine leaves and smoked eel.

For lovers of a good drink, The Greek Larder offers a superb range of classic Greek ales and wines, including delicious malt wine from Santorini. Bring a bag with you: Theodore and Panos sell Greek artisanal produce in the restaurant, so the cheese, cured pastourma, olives, Cycladic honey and other tastes of Greece you love can all be brought back home for the family to enjoy before the comfort of a very British winter log fire.

1 York Way, London N1C 4AS | 020 3780 2999  
thegreeklarder.co.uk | T: @thegreeklarder  
FB: thegreeklarder





## CUISINE FOCUS:

# Caribbean

Written by  
TEAM GOOD THINGS



## BOOM BURGER

The vibe at West London's BOOM Burger is a brilliant reflection of the diverse postcode in which it sits; blending authentic Caribbean influences with the flavours of a cosmopolitan neighbourhood. Founder Josh de Lissier hails from Montego Bay, his background standing him in good stead to cook up – and show off – the Jamaican food he was raised on.

The decor is unmistakably island-influenced, but in case you had any doubts, the music that bursts forth confirms the case. Everything on BOOM Burger's menu has a pronounced Caribbean accent, too; bar the venue's eponymous cheese-and-bacon-jam-lavished burger and the un-reconstructed French fries.

But we're here for a dose of sunshine food. After a couple of rounds of BOOM Burger's punchy rum-laced 'So Sorrel' cocktail, jerk and fish 'BOOMS' make a big bang; springy buns, generous fillings, and jolly clever condiments. The former features a mango and pawpaw sauce which flatters all its fillings – juicy jerk chicken, sharp rocket, and fried plantain; whilst the latter's snapper is enlivened with escovitch sauce and a smear of jerk mayo.

Portions are pretty generous, but who could resist a helping of the saltfish fritters known as 'stamp and go' and a pile of seasoned plantain fries on the side? In lieu of dessert, a pair of piña colodas makes a fine finale.

272 Portobello Rd, London W10 5TZ | 020 8960 3533  
boomburger.co.uk | T: BOOMBurgerLDN  
FB: boomburgers

## BAMBOULA

The name of Marlene and Lawrence Fearon's buzzing Brixton restaurant refers to both a traditional bread and an African street dance – and it's evident that from your fellow diners' smiles that the food gets tastebuds jumping.

The 16 year-old restaurant was originally opened to showcase how to use Walkerswood-brand spices, and, on the menu, authenticity is adhered to with few frills or fanciful re-imaginings. Lunchtime deals are a big local draw – fill your belly with a plump stuffed roti or one of the fantastic-value, all-in meal deals.

When darkness falls, it's a treat to eat in the tropical plant-populated, lantern-littered dining room. The 'Top Gully' plantain ring, stuffed with sautéed ackee and saltfish, makes a fine starter. All main dishes are tempting; lively guava-glazed jerk lamb ribs; oxtail and butterbeans; chicken rundown in its creamy coconut sauce; an unusual callaloo lasagne for vegetarians. On the side, try rice and peas, deep-fried 'festival', or the starchy boiled bits collectively known as 'ground provisions'; and a glass of homemade punch or Ital juice.

Do try and save space for pudding – and do make it a helping of the spectacular Wray & Nephew rum hard dough bread pudding savoured with a cup of Blue Mountain coffee.

12 Acre Lane, London SW2 5SG | 020 7737 6633  
bamboulakitchen.co.uk | T: BamboulaKitchen  
FB: BamboulaRestaurant







## DISCOVERY BAY

It would be fair to say that, where the majority of the amazing Caribbean food available in the UK is concerned, presentation comes somewhat secondary to achieving a taste that touches your soul. Indeed, not too many food-lovers would prefer the reverse; but it's always pleasing to encounter style backed up with substance.

Discovery Bay's Barrington Douglas believes that by showcasing classic Caribbean food to the masses, the neglected cuisine will finally achieve the recognition so deserved. Elegant presentation only enhances menus which offer a modern twist on traditional fare; the chef bringing punchy island flavours to items like his special jerk pork pie.

For starters, a mini tapas platter gives a duo of diners a good sampling of specialties: succulent, spicy chicken wings, Discovery Bay's house-style ribs, sweet potato spring rolls and saltfish fritters. Fans of tangy, fresh flavours will love escabeche fish bathed in a pickle-y marinade, whilst curry goat offers a deeper, richer experience. It's easy to see why the pork in a creamy rum sauce has earned a place on the 'special' dish list.

Both the concise Caribbean cocktail list and the 'luxurious rums' are worth exploring – the latter paired, perhaps, with a slice of homemade ginger cake.

12 Wood St, Huddersfield, HD1 1DG  
01484 300211 | [discoverybayuk.com](http://discoverybayuk.com)  
T: [DiscoveryBayUK](http://DiscoveryBayUK)

## DUTCHY'S JAMAICAN JERK SHACK

Newport doesn't exactly abound with Caribbean fare, but then perhaps that's because Dutchy's does it so well. The restaurant is all about home-made, home-style food accompanied by a good few tropical tipples and hearty helpings of good music and good vibes.

The dining room is a thoroughly pleasant place to pass a couple of hours; lots of rustic wood, candles set in wax-laden bottles, bright splashes of yellow and green. Cocktails are a strength, quite literally; try the 'Miss Chris's' knockout rum punch, or order a jug of 'Mango Slam' for your party to share. 'Country Boy callaloo' is a starter that's both delicious and nutritious, whilst 'Ochos Rios' hot wings are exactly as advertised – best order another Guinness punch to extinguish the flames.

Main course jerk meats come spiced from mild through to super-spicy; the heat level specified by the diner according to tolerance. St Elisabeth-style stewed beef goes down



a treat with a pile of rice and peas, and Westmorland sweet potato curry is a fine meat-free option. It's safe to say that you definitely won't go home hungry, but equally safe to say that greedy extra side orders of delicious johnnycakes and sweet fried plantains will be welcome.

15 North St, Newport NP20 1JZ  
07947 141019 | [dutchys.co.uk](http://dutchys.co.uk)  
FB: [dutchysnewport](https://www.facebook.com/dutchysnewport)

## RICE & THINGS

Jamie Oliver is a fan of Bristol's Rice & Things – a restaurant where the team doesn't just want you to eat well, but also transport you to Jamaica and give you a full-on island experience. So committed to his craft is chef Neufville that he serves food forth from breakfast to dinner, seven days a week.

Rice & Things imports authentic ingredients like soupsop leaves and black mint from the Caribbean. Lunchtime specials might include a vegetarian stew from Jamaica's Ital community, curry goat, or spicy fried chicken. In the evening, the main menu offers you the chance to take a regional romp across Jamaica, so order well and widely.

Rosegrey coconut shrimps features flavours quite simply made for one another, whilst roasted fish from Manchoniél showcases doctorfish – a species well-worth getting to know. Westmorland stew contains chunks of melt-in-the-mouth oxtail, and an order of black-eyed bean-sauced Maypen pork sees not a scrap left on the plate. Sides of roti and crushed, salted fried green plantains are essential, as is a slice of Jamaican fruitcake with rum cream.



Exploring the extensive list of house-made juices and cocktails is strongly advised – particularly the latter's 'Duppy'; named for a Jamaican spirit of the spooky, rather than alcoholic, kind.

120 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol, BS6 5RW  
0117 924 4832 | [riceandthings.co.uk](http://riceandthings.co.uk)





## PABLO'S CAFE

Pablo's has been very happily dishing up helpings of top-notch authentic Caribbean cuisine from various venues for well over a decade. And, when you eat your way through the menu served in the Leeds cafe, that experience is evident. The bold, bright decor sets the tone as soon as you enter, reggae rhythms provide the soundtrack to your meal, and an open kitchen offers a little extra entertainment.

If you've never started your day the Caribbean way, pick up a pot of cornmeal or peanut porridge and a fresh juice at breakfast time. Later in the day, when the mind turns to meatier matters, tasty mains like rich oxtail stew and the quintessential curry goat take centre stage. Hungry chicken fans could do worse than split a whole jerked bird, served with sauce and a quartet of fried dumplings, with a friend of equal appetite. The 'fish dinner' delivers a delicious and healthful plateful; a whole fried, steamed, or stewed fish served with okra and vegetables or rice and peas.

If you're really pushing the boat out, finish your feast with one of Pablo's signature ice cream sundaes, piled high in the glass and lavished with toppings – or opt for a slightly-more slimline serving of frozen yogurt.

58 Roseville Rd, Leeds LS8 5DR  
0113 244 6820 | [pabloscafe.co.uk](http://pabloscafe.co.uk)  
FB: Pabloscafe | T: pablos\_cafe

## THE RUM HOUSE

One thing is plain as soon as you enter The Rum House: it's a real looker. With bare brickwork, Chesterfield sofas, spindly matte metal chairs, pendant lights and fancy gold-framed mirrors, it's a bit Baroque-y, but definitely no horror show.

The carefully-crafted cocktail list is as much of a draw as the quirky Caribbean menu. It opens with a list of 'house rules'; amongst them the prohibition of 'shouting, screaming, yelling, flicking, kicking, slapping, punching, hitting, and poking'. Take note, then take a seat and eat. The food menu is made up of a clutch of Caribbean-style tapas, rounded out with sliders and sides. By far the best option is to share a selection amongst your group.

This approach enables you to create a balanced, bespoke feast. Flavours are exciting, and textural contrasts are pronounced in many of the small plates; the tender meat on the braised pork ribs offset by a crisp and colourful slaw; the creamy-centred corn croquettes encased in a crunchy shell, their chilli-lime aioli at once heating and cooling. A stew of callaloo and mixed beans is comforting; jerk wing lollipops all-too easy to eat. On the sweet side, the 'banoffee jar' with Sailor Jerry's spiced rum caramel perfectly sums up The Rum House's spirit.

9 Broad Street, Hockley, Nottingham NG1 3AJ | 0115 924 1555  
[rumhouse.co.uk](http://rumhouse.co.uk) | T: @rumhouseuk  
FB: rumhousenottingham



## TURTLE BAY

Manchester's Turtle Bay is part of a small UK chain which has built up a solid reputation for its sure-footed Caribbean food offering. The decor doesn't so much nod toward the islands that the restaurant is inspired by as shout it out loud and proud - lots of distressed wood; fancy brickwork, bright paint and neon signage; and plenty of salvaged, lightly-upcycled paraphernalia.

Cocktails pull in the crowds – Turtle Bay is as much somewhere to stop and sip a few drinks with friends as it is a dining destination. As you'd expect, the selection is both ample and totally tropical.

Starters and other small bites go by the name of 'cutters', and encompass some of the Caribbean's best-loved street snacks. Perhaps most interesting is 'Trini doubles', composed of a pair of rotis with curried chickpeas, chutney and coconut shavings. It would be fair to say that the 'lunch and lights' menu features Carib-ish dishes which display clear accents from elsewhere, but a selection of 'one pot' stews and curries and the unavoidable jerk pit selection means that the classics are also all very much present and correct. Once again, desserts are a mixture of island items and contemporary fusion; traditional Caymanas rum cake appears alongside a nouvelle, novel spiced chocolate pot.

33-35 Oxford St, Manchester M1 4WB (branches across the UK)  
0161 236 4101  
[turtlebay.co.uk](http://turtlebay.co.uk) | T: Turtlebayuk  
FB: TurtleBayRestaurants





## CARIB GRILL

Moseley's Carib Grill offers a genuinely jolly welcome – the team is happy to have you there, and wants you to know it. The pleasant, basic dining room has been embellished in a simple yet effective style, the walls draped in the flags of various Caribbean islands and the ceiling swathed in coloured fabric. Twinkly fairy lights further add to the ambience, as does a large painting of Caribbean cricketers in the middle of a game.

The restaurant opens only in the evening, allowing you all day to anticipate a big laid-back dinner. Don't choose a single starter; opt, instead, for a platter which features two types of chicken, Jamaican patties, Bajan fishcakes, and crab claws. Putting the mains under sub-headings is useful, but doesn't make choosing from the splendid selection one iota easier.

'From de Dutchie' (pot) comes an unusual pilau from Trinidad and Tobago, a first cousin to India's biryani. Matagee is billed as a 'Carib Delight', and it is. This super coconut-sauced stew comes with fried dumplings and bursts with saltfish, yam, coconut, plantain, okra, and sweet potato. Choose the 'Carib delight medley', and you'll get to try it alongside curry goat and ackee and saltfish. It's worth saving a small space for banana pudding and Tortuga rum cake.

2 - 4 St Mary's Row, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8JG  
0121 449 8818 | [caribgrill.co.uk](http://caribgrill.co.uk) | T: caribgrill  
FB: carib.grill

## THE RUM KITCHEN

London's Carnaby is always lively, but The Rum Kitchen adds an extra layer of energy to the area. The restaurant is in Kingly Court – a small yard just off Carnaby's main street, and the interior's bold colour, clever clutter and distressed decor puts an unmistakably Caribbean stamp on the premises; there's painted wood, colourful oil drums on the ceiling, and quirky touches like using real records as placemats.

Cocktails are a treat. The food menu is more concise than many Caribbean restaurants, but the capsule collection of dishes has been well-considered and ticks all the vital boxes. Little bites – saltfish fritters, island-spiced squid, a veg-packed Jamaican patty – are welcome nibbles to have whilst sipping something that obviously should be rum-laced.

Unless you believe burgers really can't be beat, choose from the 'classics' when you make up your mind on mains. Yam and sweet potato mash is a tasty accompaniment to the jerk chicken supreme which is also served with callaloo and spinach, whilst the rightfully-colourful 'rainbow salad' is an invigorating eat that can be made more substantial with the addition of jerk salmon. Whatever you opt to eat, ensure you exploit the opportunity to enjoy one or more of the 100 rums stocked in the 'secret cellar'.

1st Floor Kingly Court, London  
W1B 5PW | [therumkitchen.com](http://therumkitchen.com)  
T: [therumkitchen](http://therumkitchen)  
FB: [TheRumKitchen](http://TheRumKitchen)





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178	Kimchee	Korean
178	Lavash	Korean
178	Lima Floral	Peruvian
178	Little Persia	Persian
179	Manoush Cuisine	Persian
179	Namaaste Kitchen	Indian, Pakistani & Bangladeshi
179	On the Bab	Korean
179	OPSO	Greek
179	Orkideh	Persian
179	Penkul & Banks	Modern fusion
180	Pond Dalston	Hawaiian
180	Shochu Lounge	Japanese
180	Spice Market	Asian fusion
180	Tapas Revolution	Spanish
180	Ting	Modern Europe-Asian
181	The Palomar	Middle Eastern
181	Tohbang	Korean
181	Yalla Yalla	Lebanese

### MANCHESTER

181	Alborz	Persian
181	Australasia	Pan-Asian
181	Cachumba	Fusion
181	Rayhoon	Persian
181	Vermilion	Indian, Thai & Japanese

### NEWCASTLE

182	Dabbawal	Indian
182	Electric East	Southeast Asian
182	Luigikhans	Indian
182	Quilliam Brothers	Hungarian
183	The Old Siam	Thai

### OXFORD

183	Edamame	Japanese
183	Makan La	Malaysian
184	Moya	Slovakian

### NOTTINGHAM

184	Calcutta Club	Indian
184	Yamas	Greek & Spanish

### BELFAST

184	Archana	Indian
184	Gingerroot	Indian
184	The Boathouse	Modern fusion
184	Zen	Chinese & Japanese

## SCOTLAND

### ABERDEEN

185	Rendezvous at Nargile	Turkish
185	Shri Bheema's	Indian
185	Yorokobi	Japanese & Korean

### EDINBURGH

185	Shilla	Korean
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### GLASGOW

185	Dakhin South	South Indian
185	Indian Kitchen	Indian
186	Hanoi Bike Shop	Vietnamese
186	Persia	Persian
186	Persian Paradise	Persian
186	Sholeh	Persian
186	Stravaigin	Global

## WALES

### BRIDGEND

186	Bokhara	Indian
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### CARDIFF

186	Moksh	Indian
187	My Place	Polish

### SWANSEA

187	Garuda	Indonesian
187	Kan Zaman	Lebanese
187	Nishimura	Japanese
187	Rasoi Indian Kitchen	Indian

## ENGLAND



## BATH



## RAJPOOT

When approaching Rajpoot, blink and you will miss the entrance. The door takes you down to a decadently-fitted underground cave, where you are met by friendly staff serving drinks in the bar area before being shown to your table. It is hard not to notice just how much care and attention has been paid to the colourful, ornamental décor. It gets better – as you are shown to your table, the rooms become themed: Alap, Chameli, India Cottage, Jonaki, Kameni, Kamra and Old India - you decide. Certainly, you wouldn't have thought there was this much space down here.

At both lunch and dinner, we were impressed with the energy and attentive service. The food? Signature dishes include jhal noorpuri (chicken cooked with rare herbs and green chillies in a hot sauce) or jaflang – a Rajpoot classic, with chicken cooked using herbs and spices collected from the hills of Jaflang in Northern Bangladesh). The major house speciality lies in the achari golda chingri – a stunning dish of marinated Bangladeshi king prawns.

Rajpoot House 4 Argyle Street, Bath BA2 4BA | 01225 466833 | [rajpoot.com](http://rajpoot.com)  
T: @RajpootBath | FB: Rajpoot-Restaurant



## YAK YETI YAK

Set in the basement of three listed 18th Century town houses, the rather unassuming Yak Yeti Yak is a Nepalese restaurant firmly on our radar. It boasts a variety of dining areas, a separate bar and two courtyard gardens each with its own different theme. There is even a traditional

Nepalese-style dining room with low level tables and floor cushions. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, with soft ambient music.

Having spent many years travelling around Nepal leading expeditions, the owners have collected a diverse and personal mix of artifacts and everyday items that now adorn the walls and ceilings of the restaurant. Amongst the many bits and pieces, there are bells from yak caravans, village gadgets, jungle artwork and climbing gear from past Everest expeditions - including a pair of boots that have actually been to the summit.

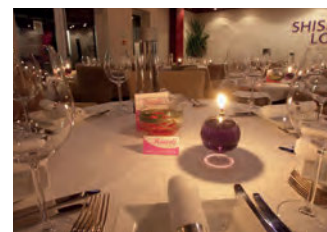
The team sources its ingredients locally, and source from small independent traders as far as possible. Yak Yeti Yak also produces many ingredients in-house themselves, with teas from their tea garden in Nepal, eggs from their own chickens and vegetables from their vegetable plot just outside Bath. The pure Nepalese menu features attentively-prepared dishes including chicken jhol (meat on the bone stir-fried with ginger and garlic), pork bhutuwa (marinated in the house mix of freshly-ground spices and stir-fried with tomato and spring onion) and lamb tamar (slow-cooked with bamboo shoots, black-eye peas and potato).

Without question, the dining experience at Yak Yeti Yak is both intimate and delightful - one of the best on offer in Bath.

12 Pierrepont Street, Bath BA1 1LA  
01225 442299 | [yakyeti-yak.co.uk](http://yakyeti-yak.co.uk)  
T: [yakandyeti](http://yakandyeti) | FB: YakYeti



## BERKSHIRE



## HAWELI

Based in the affluent Berkshire town of Twyford, this classy restaurant serves authentic cuisine with seasonally-changing menus. Using fresh, local produce and ingredients, Haweli offers amazing experimental dishes for each course – try steamed Dover sole wrapped in spinach and banana leaf as a main. What struck us is the attention to detail paid to every element, and how unorthodox and traditional ingredients are combined to make fine dishes. The dessert menu is testament to this approach; including a clever combination of chocolate peanut butter tube, jaggery cake with cumin marshmallow and sugar cane. Haweli,



which also comprises its own shisha lounge, seats around 50 diners and offers a spacious and relaxed atmosphere for every occasion.

15 Church Street, Twyford RG10 9DN  
0118 9320939 | [hawelitywford.co.uk](http://hawelitywford.co.uk)



## MALIKS

This beautiful and elegant restaurant lies nestled on the Thames in the village of Cookham – and is a favourite of chef Heston Blumenthal. Regularly hosting an array of glitterati from the fields of sports and entertainment, Maliks serves exceptional food that truly does awaken the senses. Try green chicken curry, stuffed chillies and an unusual pancake kebab, and you'll agree. Aside from the food, the comprehensive selection of wines helps ensure a truly memorable evening – a venue we'd heartily recommend for impressing a date or treating your parents.

High Street, Cookham, Maidenhead SL6 9SF | 01628 520085 | [maliks.co.uk](http://maliks.co.uk)



## LASAN

This sublime, modern Indian restaurant won Gordon's Best Local Restaurant hunt, gaining chef Aktar Islam the recognition so deserved. With Lasan's menu, he offers signature dishes that bring a true essence

of colourful India to Birmingham. We loved lassoni malai tikka - grilled garlic-and-fennel-flavoured free-range Creedy Carver chicken breast that we lapped up with honey beetroot and green chutney.

The starter only further fuelled our collective appetite to explore the main menu. We went for dum ki biryani, and relished each mouthful of the spice-perfumed goat and Basmati rice dish. As our waiter explained, the ingredients are layered in a pot with Lucknowi gravy, mint, yogurt and selected spices including cardamom and mace, then sealed and cooked under steam to yield one of the most aromatic versions of the dish that we've enjoyed to date.

3-4 Dakota Buildings, James Street, St Paul's Square, Birmingham B3 1SD | 0121 212 3664 | [lasan.co.uk](http://lasan.co.uk) | T: @lasan  
FB: Lasan-Restaurant



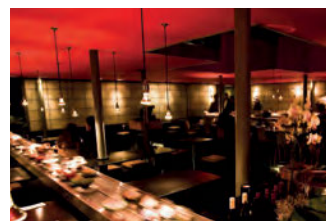
## PUNJABI RASOI

Combining a dash of strong Indian spice with awe-inspiring flavours and flair, Punjabi Rasoi is one of Birmingham's finest Indian restaurants. The food is purely Punjabi, taking inspiration from the North Indian region, while the style and taste of the cuisine served is authentic yet unique, with chefs adding their own flourish.

All the chefs have a 5-star background and their skills and knowledge means that traditional dishes all have their own unique character. Starters include gol guppa (a street snack of small crisp semolina shells filled with chick peas and potatoes to which you add spiced water), Punjabi tiger prawns, tandoori salmon, and Amritsari machi (crisp deep-fried spiced fish pakoras). Incredible main courses include murgh keema - a fusion dish featuring both chicken tikka and minced lamb, comforting mince-and-green-pea keema matter, and a knockout lamb biryani. The drinks menu is rather extensive with something for all tastes.

The restaurant is dressed in cool blue hues which help maintain the relaxed atmosphere. The bar area encourages a quick cocktail before dinner and the glass roof means that the restaurant is flooded with lots of natural light, particularly on late summer evenings. It's a perfect location for an after-work dinner or weekend meal with the family.

980 Warwick Rd, Acocks Green, Birmingham, B27 6QG | 0121 706 6450  
[thepunjabirasoi.co.uk](http://thepunjabirasoi.co.uk) | T: @Punjabi\_Rasoi  
FB: punjabirasoi.birmingham



## MOSHIMO

Moshimo is notorious, not only for its incredible food, but because of its love of fish. Here, fish are taken care of and prepared properly. The venue even runs a photography-fuelled fish sustainability programme called 'FISHLOVE', offers sushi cookery classes, and hangs fish paintings on the walls. At Moshimo, fish appreciation is a way of life.

In Bartholomew Square, stuck in the modernist Opticon building, fresh, raw fish is expertly sliced into succulent, nourishing pieces of flesh. Everything you eat in-house is home-made; everything caught is local. With a cold Asahi beer placed by your right hand, you order fish prepared to varying degrees of rawness, with small dishes (called kōzara), big dishes (ōzara), shirumono soups, ramen, stir fry, sashimi and, of course, sushi to pick from.

Go for gunkan, or 'battleship' sushi – it delivers a spicy kick, but the flavours are intense and delicious. The Cornish crab, ikura (salmon roe) and uni (sea urchin) are exotic, but, like everything Moshimo does, good, fresh British produce is fused in a Japanese style.

A hot, seasonal dish of Korean kimchi stew is the pick of the crop – caramelised onion and homemade kimchi pickles give this stew of vegetables, soft pulled pork and mochi rice cakes a deeply savoury umami kick like no other.

Bartholomew Square, Brighton BN1 1JS  
0127 3719 195 | [moshimo.co.uk](http://moshimo.co.uk)  
T: @MoshimoBrighton  
FB: MoshimoBrighton



## THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

The Northern Lights is a Scandinavian bar and kitchen situated in a sleepy, old fisherman's cottage in Brighton's vibrant South Lanes. This magical Nordic hangout

sells open sandwiches, reindeer flesh and frothing concoctions that will warm the deepest cockles of your barnacled heart.

Try the pickled herring, served with fresh rye bread, salad, beetroot and aioli. Or the pyttipanna, a traditional Scandinavian brunch of ham (or mushrooms in the veggie version), onions, and potatoes – all sautéed and topped with a fried egg.

With a shot of one of two dozen flavoured vodkas – including Scandinavian favourite Salmiakki and the unique, smoky Terva-Tar – cutting icily through your veins, order the ragmun: fried pork belly served on rösti potato, creamed spinach, pickled beetroot and lingonberry jam. It isn't too heavy, and the pork belly combines with the jam to create a deep, sweet flavor profile.

As they say in Finnish: 'Hyvää ruokahalua! Varsågod! Vellbekomme! Åð velkomnir!' Which means, quite simply: enjoy your meal!

6 Little East Street, Brighton BN1 1HT  
0127 374 7096

[northernlightsbrighton.co.uk](http://northernlightsbrighton.co.uk) |  
T: @NLightsBrighton

FB: Northern-Lights-Brighton



## MYRISTICA

With the cobbled street outside, rustic industrial sheds and newly built building housing opposite, you'd be forgiven for thinking this was a quirky, experimental nouveau cuisine house, opportunistically plonked into reclaimed space.

When you step into Myristica, you are greeted by an immaculate, classic décor, evidenced by the cream-upholstered seating throughout the restaurant. It has an intimacy and privacy as a result of the complementing blinds, and the service is second to none, with every step of a perfect dining experience given attention.

House specialities are announced, including authentic, region-specific Indian food that goes far beyond the highly



'anglicised' menus of normal curryhouses. Myristica has not shied away from British produce, though - creating dishes with fresh, locally-sourced ingredients including rabbit (in the varuval - meat tossed with onions, chillies, curry leaves and ground spices), venison (tandoori-cooked in 'achari' - a delicate pickling marinade, and even Barbary duck (oven-roasted breast glazed with garlic, tamarind and sesame seeds.

Using local game like seasonal partridge is en vogue in high-end curryhouses at present, but these dishes are executed wonderfully and still give that aura of an adventurous kitchen. The rest of the menu (including some household favourites) is just as delectable: side dishes were incredibly tasty and the drinks and wine menu extensive.

51 Welshback, Bristol BS1 4AN  
myristica.co.uk | 0117 930 0806  
T: @AmitMyristica | FB: amitlak



## SURAKHAN

Nestled in the heart of Bristol's dining and entertainment sector, Miyoung Kim's Bristol Good Food Awards 2012 Best Asian category winner, Surakhan, has been attracting West Country foodies since she set up shop in 2012.

'Sura' is the word given to the 900-year tradition of fitting a king's dining table with 12 special dishes, 12 times a day. 'Khan' is also the Mongol word for king; the two combining to attach a sense of regal purpose to Bristol's first ever Korean restaurant.

Kim spent six years perfecting her Surakhan sauces at home, hoping they would melt the hearts of native Bristol locals. Her resulting menu is hard-earned and traditional, with the restaurant's own breed of dolsot bibimbap served piping hot in an earthenware pot, and with a base of beautifully crispy rice, cooked vegetables and gochujang (red chilli paste).

Everything is prepared in a loving, motherly way, and the restaurant feels like a large familial home; each customer fed and celebrated through the deep traditions of Korean cuisine.

52 Park Row, Bristol BS1 5LH  
0117 929 0806 | surakhanrestaurant.com  
T: @SurakhanMiyoung  
FB: Surakhan.miyoung



## ANATOLIA

The self-proclaimed 'best Turkish restaurant in Cambridge' has been grilling since 1997 and has a loyal following on Regent Street, across the way from Downing College.

Though predominantly a takeaway restaurant, the sit-in area is comfortable, with the hot, busy kitchen behind closed doors. The music is often quite loud and belly dancers are a mainstay, so it may not be the best option if you're looking for a cosy quiet evening entertaining family and friends.

A perfect meal at Anatolia would have to include dolma, stuffed vine leaves filled with steamy rice, lemon and olive oil. These are palatable and juicy, with the tender vine leaves leaving a pleasant bitterness on the palate that is instantly soothed by the herby rice and oil.

To follow, opt for a pideler, or Turkish pizza. Kusbasili pide is topped with diced lamb, onions green peppers, and parsley - a tasty mix. Or, from the grills, carnivores heed our words: the Ali Nazik is to die for, featuring smoked aubergine accompanied by barbecued lamb, yoghurt and a generous portion of rice. The aubergine itself tastes almost like meat; the flesh syrupy and bronzed, well-flavoured by the smoky meat.

Alternatively, go down the fishy route with some fried local sea bass - a simple option, but one that provides homely flavours to set you off on your way through misty colleges and cobbled lanes.

22 Regent St, Cambridge CB2 1DB  
01223 362372 | anatoliacambridge.co.uk  
FB: AnatoliaCambridge



## BEDOUIN

Bedouin serves North African cuisine (Moroccan, mostly) out of its carpet-walled hideout on Mill Road. Entering is like walking into a wonderful washing machine, with coloured fabrics strewn and sewn over the restaurant's walls. The music is authentic and the tent-like atmosphere makes you worry about the camels outside. Don't worry; we're still in Cambridge.

Even the chairs are like irregular slabs of driftwood, washed up on the Algerian coast and crowned by a trestle of woven fabric. The setting smells of warm, baked bastilla - briq pastry parcels stuffed with turmeric, ginger and coriander-cooked chicken, onions and toasted almonds, all dusted with icing sugar and cinnamon. As a Berber voice echoes from a nearby speaker, steaming sardine bel darsa arrives at our table. A mound of sardine fillets are marinated in spicy mixture, dusted in flour and pan-fried. On the side is a cool and tangy red onion and fennel salad.

Mains are rich and filling. We are offered two specialities: hout bel darsa - pan-fried fish of the day with a spicy tomato, red pepper and fresh herb marinade, served with garlic sautéed potatoes and green beans; and, for vegetarian mouths, betenjel farci - oven baked aubergine parcels filled with goat's cheese and basil, served with a sweet tomato sauce and vegetable rice.

This traditional, exuberant taste of North Africa, along with a sweet helping of 'Crêpes Berber' - pancakes served with an orange, honey and raisin reduction - helps the evening along nicely. We'll be coming back soon.

100 Mill Rd, Cambridge CB1 2BD  
01223 367660 | bedouin-cambridge.com  
FB: bedouincambridge



## RICE BOAT

Imagine a boat made of rice. It's unusual, and delicious. Like its namesake then - the restaurant that you'll find tucked away by the reedy riverbanks and obscured by old Cantabrian buildings. There's never a common setting for a South Indian curry house; and, as the wry scholars of Cambridge are quick to remind: 'never judge a book by its cover'.

Inside the smell of fresh jasmine, rice and spices elbows its way up your nostrils.

Everyone is helpful; the setting clean and functional. The starters arrive: vada - fluffy lentil doughnuts, served with coconut chutney. They dissolve on your tongue, the intense savour of the lentil batter sweetened by the relish. It is a beguiling mixture of sweet and savoury, leaving one awaiting the main course with anticipation.

The vegetarian of the party goes on to sample the aubergine theeyal, a whole aubergine cooked in a roasted masala featuring shallots, coconut and tamarind. The remaining carnivores tuck into a mixture of species - tiger king prawns in unripe mango curry; Kerala beef fry; Kerala red fish curry.

The sharp mango brightens the flavour of the prawns in their coconut gravy, and the beef is spicy and aromatic - but the fish curry wins the spot as king of the table. This is the signature dish of Rice Boat; large pieces of kingfish cooked in a highly-spiced sauce whose smoky-sour taste comes from 'kokum' - an ingredient popular along the Konkan coast.

37 Newnham Rd, Cambridge CB3 9EY |  
01223 302800 | riceboat.co.uk  
T: @RiceBoatCams  
FB: Rice-Boat-Kerala-Restaurant-Cambridge-UK



## LITTLE SEOUL

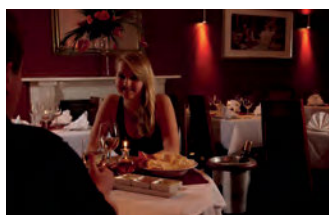
Set against the river Cam, the undulating hills of Cambridgeshire and the black, fur-fringed gowns of scholars, the little Little Seoul stands proud, with a red doorway about as wide as a post box. Inside the place unravels, and you spill into a pretty dining hall that showcases the intensity of an authentic Korean kitchen.

The menu is simple and delicious. The eye instinctively wanders to a familiar ally - the bulgogi. Here it stands, addressed only by three stark Korean symbols and a short description. But these tenderloin strips, marinated and made smoky with soy sauce, ginger and sesame oil, are delicious. Again, the simplicity of the menu shines through as we spill onto the tonkatsu curry - a crispy pork cutlet, smothered in curry sauce and rice. The deep, shredded warmth of the pork is sweet and buttery. Moreish flavours flash over your tongue, with the inevitable result of you ordering more.

In the tiny softly-lit space, the ambience makes you even hungrier. Time for a grilled eel? When it arrives, you part the thick, dark flesh with your chopsticks and the fatty white meat falls into a puddle of teriyaki sauce. As you sit, you sip: sampling all manner of liqueurs, spirits and beers from the large Korean drinks menu. This little Korean paradise is a true taste sensation.

108 Regent St, Cambridge CB2 1DP  
01223 330 8681 | littleseoul.co.uk  
FB: Little-Seoul





## SPICE LODGE

Situated in an Old Manor House in Cheltenham, this charmingly luxurious restaurant serves Pan Asian, Indian and Thai cuisines; the menu drawing inspiration from both the Orient and Indian Subcontinent. We found flavours uniquely pleasing – sampling palak hiran (pan-roasted venison served with sautéed spinach and a delicately-spiced coconut milk gravy) and a competent Pad Thai when we dined. Kao kati coconut rice might be a simple side dish, but here it's done well enough to have craving a return visit, when we'll also make further inroads into the wide selection of fine wines and beers.

Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham GL50 1TY  
01242 226300 | [spicelodge.com](http://spicelodge.com)  
T: @SpiceLodge | FB: Spice-Lodge



## CINNAMON CULTURE

Occupying a former Georgian public house, Cinnamon Culture's decor has retained all the elegance associated with the period. The food, though, is something that the pub patrons of times past could only dream of.

'Modern Indian' is a catch-all description that doesn't quite capture the essence of Cinnamon Culture's Michelin-recommended cuisine. Presentation is designed with the aesthete in mind, but the flavours are as authentic as they come. There's ample room for innovation, but little for the kind of frills and fripperies that do nothing to improve taste.

All of India's regions are represented, with seafood dishes from the South - like sea bass in a 'pappas' sauce, served with curry leaf mash - a particular strength. Various locally-sourced wild meats are always on the regularly-updated menu, too. We loved the strident spicing and tender meat in our buffalo kurumalaku, which comes with a date-stuffed rendition of the exemplary naan that has garnered so many fans.

Bookending the mains are starters like signature clove-smoked Kandahari lamb chops and addictive chilli paneer, and a solid dessert list from which we enjoyed the unusual options of beetroot halwa and a crisp chocolate samosa. Cocktails are as innovative.

46 Plaistow Lane, Bromley BR1 3PA  
020 8289 0322 | [cinnamonculture.com](http://cinnamonculture.com)  
T: @cinnamonculture  
FB: CinnamonCulture

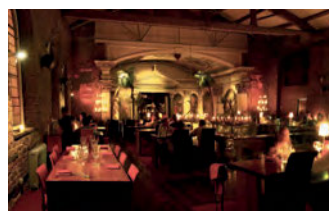


## SHAMPÁN 4

This is Indian dining on a grand scale, seating an impressive 330 diners at full capacity. You might well want to return time and time again after tasting what the menu has to offer – so we recommend opting to sit within a different one of the five distinct dining areas on each occasion.

The unique menu is made up of a mixture of classics from the entire Indian subcontinent alongside modern dishes with interesting twists. On our visit, we enjoyed red mullet in Goan spices and 'minty haash kebab' – diced duck marinated in roasted cumin, fresh mint, coriander seeds, natural yoghurt and papaya. There's something to suit everyone – and everyone will enjoy the vibrant atmosphere.

The Spinning Wheel, Grays Road,  
Westerham TN16 2HX | 01959 572622  
[shampangroup.com](http://shampangroup.com) | T: @shampanGroup  
FB: ShampánSpinningWheel



## ALMA DE CUBA

Alma de Cuba has been described as an island in the heart of the city. If looks are to go by, this upmarket, shabby-chic expanse of organised chaos is a haven – where food and drink are as well-manicured as the barman's goatee.

Alma de Cuba also hosts jazz nights and cool, laid-back blues-y afternoons. It is a hub of music, drink and laughter, populated by the trendy cats of the Liverpoolian street scene whose males mix wide, shaggy beards with bowler hats and smart Chesterfield overcoats.

This place is alive, that's for sure. On Sundays a live gospel choir woos the crowds, and as you pick through a saffron-hued, paprika-scented, seafood-packed Alma paella or a full Cuban breakfast; comprising everything you'd expect from a full fry up, plus maple-glazed bacon and spiced patatas bravas; you notice the happy atmosphere washing over its clientele. Everyone's got a smile on their face.

So kick back, sip a Solana mojito (Bacardi Oakheart spiced rum, Liqueur 43, and a squeeze of fresh orange with mint, sugar syrup and lime juice plunged over crushed ice) and abide especially by the fourth of Alma de Cuba's Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt not take oneself too seriously.' Dive headfirst into this Latin American spot in the city, and thou shalt not be disappointed.

St Peters Church, Seel St, Liverpool L1 4BH  
0843 504 4695 | [alma-de-cuba.com](http://alma-de-cuba.com)  
T: @almadecuba | FB: Alma-de-Cuba



## CHAOPHRAYA

Chaophraya Liverpool is one of six restaurants dotted around the UK,

serving up relentlessly good Thai cuisine at pedestrian rates. 'Ow jai sai' is the motto of this salubrious grotto – 'from the heart' in English – and the venue does not disappoint from starter to dessert.

We prop ourselves on the jewel-toned pyramidal pillows stacked behind us at the large round table and browse the extensive starter menu. 'See krong moo' – grilled pork spare ribs – are marinated with fresh Thai herbs and homemade barbecue sauce and come served with grilled pineapple and pink peppercorns. Tod mun pla fishcakes are made from a blend of spicy cod and coley, the 'special recipe' including green beans, lime leaves and red curry paste – all served with a sweet chilli sauce and a peanut vegetable relish. Both are delicious, and a great precursor to the mains.

For those mains, it would be silly not to try this restaurant's Thai green curry, or 'gaeng khiew waan gai'. Most restaurants have their own take on this signature dish enjoyed by so many in the British Isles, but it is too often badly done. Chaophraya's take on the renowned curry is made from young green chillies and select Thai herbs, with tender chicken breast simmered in coconut milk with courgettes, aubergine, sweet basil and chillies. Honestly, this version is delicious, and the heat is well-judged.

If you have a sweet tooth, look no further than the sumptuous chocolate and coconut ice-cream; frozen scoops coated in panko breadcrumbs, deep-fried until golden brown and drizzled with mixed fruit sauce.

Liverpool One, 5-6 Kenyon's Steps,  
Liverpool L1 3DF | 0151 707 6323  
[chaophraya.co.uk](http://chaophraya.co.uk) | T: @ChaophrayaThai  
FB: LiverpoolChaophraya



## MOWGLI STREET FOOD

Mowgli Street Food is the vision of barrister-cum-restaurateur Nisha Katona. In many ways, its existence is the antithesis of the common curry house – with humble, home-style fare cooked the way real Indians make their food in the privacy of their own kitchens.

Meat is served on the bone: ripe, deep, uncompromising and fragrant. Lightly-spiced gravies fused with vegetables, pulses, seeds and stalks serve as the heart of the vegan-inspired menu. That said, meat also features within bright, chirpy dishes that fuse flavours from the Indian subcontinent.

Real Indian street food is light, ingenious, virtuous, and simple. Much of it is vegan, and little of it is available in restaurants around the UK. Mowgli's aim is to serve real Indian food in Britain, using Liverpool as a launch pad. Nisha's venue is built



amid old, red buildings and the gritty streetscape of Bold Street, and will quite possibly ruffle a few traditionalist feathers. The food, as vibrant and 'real' as can be, finally lifts the lid on what true Indian food tastes like.

69 Bold St, Liverpool L1 4EZ | 0151 600 6000  
mowglistreetfood.com | T: @mowglistfood  
FB: Mowgli-Street-Food



## YUKTI

The mass opinion polls generated by Trip Advisor data never lie, so when a restaurant wins 'best in Liverpool', you know what you're visiting is likely to be a culinary gem. And it is so at Yukti – 'The Art Kitchen' – where cooking fresh Indian food is about incorporating British into the menu; be that in the form of Norfolk-farmed chicken, Welsh lamb, or Scottish salmon.

Set in the Old Swan area of the city, head chef Usman Ali brings all manner of bounteous English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish goodies to his dishes, including West Country soft-shell crab and local juicy king prawns. Traditional Indian dishes are served under the neon glaze of blue orb lights. Everything is well-considered, from polished cutlery and attentive staff to the menu policy which allows customers to order any dish they desire as an accompaniment rather than a main course.

To start, Indian cottage cheese comes well-marinated; the spiced paneer cooked in a tandoor then dressed with tamarind reduction and served with green pepper coulis. Or try deghi mirch Norfolk Farm chicken tikka; marinated with traditional ground 'tandoori' spices and hung yoghurt, served with tangy mint chutney.

To date, we are told that the 'catch of the day' has yet to fail to impress – so we order it. Pan-fried fish arrives, laden with spinach, served with coriander-scented bouillabaisse sauce and the curious-sounding 'chickpea gâteau' whose description had us scratching our heads. It works – the disc-shaped 'cake' complimenting the creamy fish well. All the mains, we guess, are worth a try at this Indian hotspot – so if in Liverpool, do as the Liverpudlians do. Try some Yukti food.

393 Prescot Rd, Liverpool L13 3BS  
0151 228 2225 | yukti.co.uk  
FB: Yukti.co.uk



## MAIYANGO

Fine dining meets forward-thinking fusion cuisine at this standout Leicester restaurant. Bedouin-influenced décor and intuitive service will win over those with a discerning eye for dining surroundings but, ultimately, it's the carefully-selected and confidently-executed menu that steals the show. Luscious braised shin of beef served with honey-glazed root vegetables and Pied Bleu mushrooms impressed my dining partner, while a sweet potato bhuna roll with kohlrabi tempura incorporated an array of flavours with ease. Definitely my favourite of Leicester's fine dining restaurants. Dinner for two around £60 including wine.

13-21 St. Nicholas Place, Leicester, LE1 4LD | 0116 251 8898 | maiyango.com  
T: @HotelMaiyango | FB: maiyangohotel



## ASSADO

Located in bustling Waterloo, Assado is the fourth restaurant from Cyrus Todiwala. Positioned as a 'premier casual dining restaurant', Assado is yet another platform for the ever-experimental chef

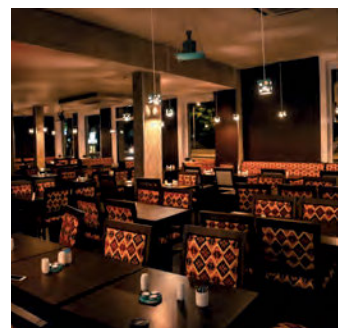
to demonstrate his knack for breaking the culinary mould.

Almost two decades on from opening the boundary-pushing Café Spice Namaste, this time it's all about blending the spices and ingredients characteristic of the chef's unique brand of Indian cuisine with the culinary traditions and techniques spread by Portuguese explorers during the period in history known as 'The Age of Discovery'. 'Assado' comes from the Portuguese word meaning 'Roast'. The venue offers a new take on East-meets-West, demonstrating the diverse cuisine that developed the world over as the Portuguese travelled and traded. The menu currently focuses firmly on the cuisine of Goa, but over time this will evolve to encompass other countries like Brazil – and indeed, wherever the Portuguese influence is felt in the food.

The casual, all-day dining restaurant is a beauty, with bright tiling, an in-house bakery, and a handful of more intimate booths. The signature dish is Goa's version of pulled pork, and a list of tapas-style small places makes the restaurant ideal for grazing with a group.

It will surprise many to see just how evident the Portuguese influence is in Goa's food, particularly in the state's Christian cuisine. From the array of breads and egg custard tarts, to the use of chillies, European-style cheeses, and spicy choris sausage, the deliciously diverse food at Assado is worth extensive exploration.

157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XA  
020 7870 3747 | assado.co.uk  
T: @AssadoWaterloo | FB: assadowaterloo



## ALAMUT

At Alamut, a Bar and Grill located on Tottenham's High Road in North London, local residents and destination diners alike can relax and enjoy the finest Turkish and Persian cuisine in a fun and family friendly environment, with well-trained staff on hand to make sure your visit is a memorable and a pleasant dining experience.

Customers experience the expansive cuisine of Turkey, while also discovering speciality Middle Eastern dishes within the restaurant's deep, smouldering setting. The menu is steeped in Turkish tradition, but Alamut also believes in variety. Diners can enjoy oven-baked authentic Neapolitan style pizzas along with their shish – as well as unique and special fusion food influenced by both Turkish and Persian cuisines.

In addition, the dessert and pastry counter serves fresh pastries and a large variety of hot drinks, ranging from high-quality coffee using freshly-ground beans through to exclusive brews and herbal teas.

363 High Road, Tottenham, N17 6QN  
020 8885 6393 | alamut.co.uk  
T: @eatalamut | FB: eatAlamut



## BARRAFINA

Sam and Eddie Hart's corner-site restaurant comprises a long marble top bar, 29 stools and a state-of-the-art open kitchen. There is also a lower ground floor space that can be booked for private dining and events featuring its own open kitchen.

Nieves Barragán Mohacho, who has worked with the Hart Brothers for over ten years, oversees the running of the kitchen as executive head chef. The menu is made up of classic and contemporary tapas, using meticulously sourced and seasonal ingredients from Spain and the British Isles. A large portion of the menu is entirely new with dishes such as milk fed lamb's kidneys, pintxos morunos, bocadillo de calamar, chicharrón, ortiguillas and papas aliñadas. The Hart Bros Special Selection Manzanilla sherry can be ordered by the bottle or glass to accompany the new menu.

For the first time, Barrafinna is also able to accommodate large groups in a private dining and event space. The menus have been designed to reflect the feasting style of family dining in Spain, with regional specialities such as txuleton (Basque rib of beef), zarzuela (Catalonian fish stew) and other favourite dishes from Barrafinna's repertoire such as chipirones and crisp-fried artichokes. A fantastic wine list accompanies, and Barrafinna's special Magnums of Spanish wine are also available.

10 Adelaide Street, London WC2N 4HZ  
020 7440 1450 | barrafinna.co.uk  
T: @BarrafinnaADst | FB: Barrafinna



## BENARES

This beautifully-elegant and stylish restaurant by Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar serves modern Indian food in a contemporary European manner.



The dining environment is sleek and the service seamless, allowing you to afford the food due attention. Produce is king here – showcased cleanly on the plate; subtly-spiced and never drowned in sauce.

Instead, Atul uses dots, dusts, drizzles and more tricks from his culinary magic box to add unexpected elements to a menu that, on our visit, included tandoor-baked Newlyn monkfish with spiced vermicelli, hand-picked Scottish crab croquette and coconut curry leaf sauce. For dessert, we loved the twist on the spongy, usually-savoury Gujarati snack 'dhokla', served here with cashew nuts, coconut cream and butterscotch. Cocktails and wine lists are also strengths.

12A Berkeley Square House,  
London W1J 6BS | 020 7629 8886  
benaresrestaurant.com  
T: @Benaresofficial  
FB: BenaresRestaurant



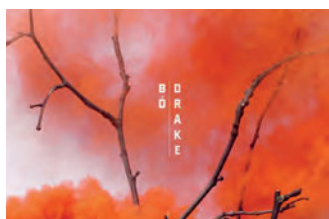
## BIBIGO

London's Bibigo is designed by Korean food giant CJ Group, and offers world-class Korean food, with vision from Korean Masterchef winner Hee Young Noh and skill from head chef Kim Yong Hwan.

Bibigo aims to balance acute Korean flavours for the Western palate. Its menu revolves around bibimbap, a central Korean dish meaning literally 'mixed rice'. This takes the form of a brilliant, colourful stew of warm, white rice topped with namul (sautéed and seasoned vegetables), gochujang (chilli pepper paste), and soy sauce, crowned with a raw or fried egg and served with finely sliced meat.

Everyone knows not to mess too much with tradition – so traditional bulgogi (chargrilled beef marinated in barbecue sauce, slathered in shiitake mushrooms and cooked with courgettes and bean sprouts) and galbi jjim, a braised short rib in soy sauce with moili and chestnuts, take centre stage. Other innovations include sundae - Korean black pudding, Korean salads and, for dessert, hodeok – a sweet Korean pancake coated in maple syrup and served with ice cream.

58-59 Great Marlborough St, London  
W1F 7JY | 020 7042 5225 | bibigouk.com  
T: @BibigoUK | FB: BibigoLondon



## BÓ DRAKE

Bó Drake, a modern East Asian BBQ restaurant and Anju bar, lies on Greek Street in London's Soho. The casual-dining restaurant is the brainchild of Jan Lee, alumni of the award-winning Roka, who grew up in his parents' restaurants along the Scottish borders.

Jan's inspiration to open Bó Drake stems from his Chinese heritage, British upbringing, and his extensive travels throughout East Asia - which all combined to inspire the creation of an exciting new take on the emerging East Asian BBQ food scene in London.

Serving a modern East Asian BBQ menu with an emphasis on smoked cooking methods alongside more traditional sweet and pickled influences from South-East Asia, the restaurant also offers a small al fresco dining space. Using British seasonal produce, signature meat dishes at Bó Drake include smoked Bobo chicken with Sriracha sauce, lime and herbs; dan dan smoked belly with chanterelles, spring onions, peanut and noodles; and pork and eel dumpling with Sichuan peppercorns and chilli oil. Stand-out seafood dishes include Loch Ryan oysters with apple and kimchi mignonette and fatty tuna bowl with avocado, jalapeno remoulade and rice, alongside vegetarian dishes such as spicy buckwheat noodles, cucumber, Korean pear, dashi and egg.

Further influenced by Korean dining traditions, the intimate bar area at Bó Drake offers Anju-style drinks to match the food dishes, and a concise wine and cocktail list, as well as traditional Korean spirit, soju.

6 Greek St, London W1D 4DE  
bodrake.co.uk | T: @bodrakesoho  
FB: BoDrakeSoho



## BOMBAY BRASSERIE

Situated in London's highly cosmopolitan Kensington, Bombay Brasserie has remained an elegant favourite amongst London's elite for almost 35 years. Opened by Indian food authority Camelia Panjabi, who latterly also founded Masala Zone, the restaurant plays host to many politicians, celebrities, and discerning food-lovers seeking to experience a taste of not only Bombay, but many other Indian regions besides.

The menu offers a variety of authentic tastes and flavours, with dishes drawn from the culinary lexicons of states including Goa, Gujarat and Bengal, also exploring items influenced by settlers like the Portuguese and British. Particularly noteworthy on our most recent visit were the Goan halibut and a masala chai brûlée. A visit is a real revelation.

Courtfield Road, London SW7 5QH  
020 7370 4040 | bombayb.co.uk  
T: @BBSW7 | FB: Bombay-Brasserie

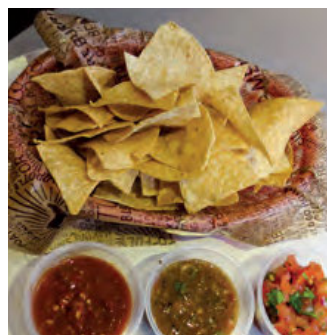


## CHAKRA

Andy Varma's stunningly-designed restaurant echoes the feeling of modern elegance and sophistication you'll pick up on from the dishes described on the menu. Presentation may be modern, but Andy's cuisine is firmly rooted in the Indian Subcontinent. At Chakra, you will encounter specialties rarely seen in the UK, prepared using a mixture of historical methods and new techniques. Dishes we enjoyed include the signature black cod and a Lucknow plate that suited an indecisive vegetarian – featuring kebabs made with lentil and mint; red kidney beans; and spinach and nutmeg kebab.

Indian dessert menus can be uninspired, but Chakra's is anything but. After extensive contemplation, we chose a beautifully-executed mishti doi (Bengali-style sweet yogurt) and a spiced apple sponge cake. Our meal offered a great introduction to this talented chef's remit, but it definitely wasn't enough. We'll be back!

157-159 Notting Hill Gate, London W11  
3LF | 020 7229 2115 | chakralondon.com  
T: @ChakraLondon  
FB: CHAKRALONDON



## CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL

Already hugely successful in America, Chipotle Mexican Grill now has 6 branches in London.

Based on the small traditional taquerias that founder Steve Eells discovered in San Francisco, the restaurant has a short menu which it does very well. I also appreciate its commitment to high welfare and quality ingredients and its effort to source locally. Choose from a large folded burrito, three tacos (served soft or toasted), a meal bowl, or a salad; then choose your preferred fillings or toppings. My recommendation is a burrito stuffed with braised and shredded pork carnitas with pinto beans, tomatillo salsa, sour cream, guacamole, cheese and lettuce. A side order of tortilla chips won't go amiss either!

114-116 Charing Cross Road, London  
WC2H 0JR | 020 7836 8491 (Other  
branch details online) | chipotle.co.uk  
T: @ChipotleUK | FB: chipotleuk



## CITY SOCIAL

Michelin-starred chef and restaurateur Jason Atherton's City Social lies within the iconic skyscraper Tower 42. Situated in the City of London, the venue features art deco-style interiors, created by award-winning designers Russell Sage Studios, against the backdrop of the stunning London skyline.

Head chef Paul Walsh has worked closely with Atherton to design the City Social menu, which features creative yet simple dishes showcasing the best of British ingredients. Seasonal signature dishes available might include the likes of English asparagus salad, pecorino cream cheese, soft poached hen's egg and bone marrow crumbs, or line-caught sea bass, deep fried oyster, cucumber, sea fennel and oyster velouté. For the first time, Atherton has added a pasta and rice selection to the menu.

There is a contemporary Art Deco look to City Social, and accents of brass sit alongside rosewood-panelled boards, chrome and smoked glass. The focal point of the venue is the free standing, dramatic black and steel open kitchen in the centre of the dining room. Here, guests can dine at the chef's table while watching the kitchen team at work; or, they can sit back and enjoy the incredible views of London from their seats.

Tower 42, 25 Old Broad Street,  
London EC2N 1HQ | 020 7877 7703  
citysociallondon.com | T: @CitySocial\_T42  
FB: CitySocialT42





## COMENSAL

Comensal, a modern Mexican bar and restaurant on Clapham's Abbeville Road, specialises in authentic food inspired by the varied and exotic cuisine of Mexico.

Owned by John Sim and Cati Bego, Comensal serves a menu of contemporary Mexican food, including enchiladas, ceviche, taquitos, homemade mole and guacamole, as well as a range of regularly-changing specials.

Signature dishes include a fillet of sea bass marinated with a chintextle sauce, and a trio of pistachio-crust lamb chops, served with a special ancho chilli sauce on a bed of polenta.

The restaurant also boasts a well-stocked bar serving a selection of beers, wines, Margaritas and a number of 100% agave tequilas. John and Cati met in Mexico City, with the latter having run a number of successful restaurants around Mexico. Comensal is their first opening in the UK, with all food made in-house by a team of Mexican chefs working solely with fresh produce.

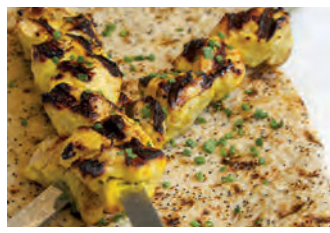
32 Abbeville Road, London SW4 9NC  
020 8673 7272 | [comensal.co.uk](http://comensal.co.uk)  
T: @ComensalGB | FB: ComensalGB



## COURTESAN DIM SUM

Go on a Saturday and your walk from the station to Courtesan Dim Sum in Brixton will be through a cacophonous market of fish mongers, ethnic grocery shops and food stalls. Inside, this classy restaurant is decorated with a nod to the imaginary noble courtesan for whom it's named - dark wood, quirky birdcages and wallpaper patterned with her tears. The inventive cocktail menu is a refreshing change from the identikit Negroni and Old-Fashioned-laden lists all over town. Wang Zhaojun, featuring violet liqueur, jasmine tea, gin and vodka, is a floral delight. Dim sum is very good, with a balanced mix of traditional items and modern twists. Don't miss the pan-fried pork dumplings, the fiery 'stormy seaweed salad' or Szechuan-style ribs.

69-73 Atlantic Road, London SW9 8PU  
020 8127 8677 | [thecourtesan.co.uk](http://thecourtesan.co.uk)  
T: @CourtesanDimSum  
FB: courtesandimsum



## DINDIN KITCHEN

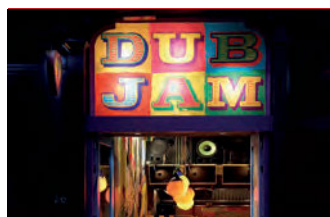
Dindin Kitchen is an innovative Persian concept restaurant. Its philosophy is to take traditional recipes that have truly survived the test of time and recreate them using only the very freshest ingredients.

Mezze dishes are prevalent in Persian cuisine and Dindin Kitchen doesn't disappoint. Classics such as tabbouleh and smoked aubergine and tomato salad sit alongside twists on age-old recipes. The endive, pomegranate and walnut salad is a simple but delicious dish, and the chopped chicken, egg and potato salad is not to be overlooked (actually salad Olivieh, similar to a Russian salad, under a different guise).

A selection of wraps, both vegetarian and meat-based, are inexpensive and provide a quick and substantial meal for both those on the go and those with time to take a seat in the restaurant. A number of working lunch deals will also appeal to the many office workers in this area of the capital.

Dindin Kitchen is a labour of love for founder Vida Tayebi, who worked on the project for some time before opening. A proud Persian herself, her passion for the food and culture of her heritage truly shines through.

52 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1X 8LT  
[dindinkitchen.com](http://dindinkitchen.com) | T: @dindin\_kitchen  
FB: dindinkitchen



## DUB JAM JERK BBQ & RUM SHACK

Covent Garden's new Dub Jam reggae kitchen fuses the spontaneity and laid-back beach vibe of the Caribbean with tasty, contemporary Jamaican barbecue flavours, whilst pumping out the soundtrack to Trojan Records with uplifting tunes from reggae legends (everyone can name their favourite).

Dub Jam's interior is packed full of quirky up-cycled design ideas; lights made from reclaimed buoys, tin cans and Red Stripe stubby bottles hang from the walls which are fly-posted with graphic, original Trojan record covers and street art inspired by Kingston's acclaimed Studio One. Stools made from beer kegs and car wheels, a shelf bar made from half a surfboard and a cake display made from an old record player add to the experience. Even the

bench seating is recycled from the original timber floor. As a small homage to Duke Reid, the originator of the reggae sound system, Dub Jam's rear wall is a carnival-style stack of speakers.

Rooted in Caribbean everyday favourites, the menu includes Dub Jam's range of 'Jerk Rebel Skewers', marinated for 48 hours in the kitchen's own jerk recipes and smoked for 12-24 hours before being grilled on the BBQ. Skewers include 'jammin' jerk chicken', jerk pork belly, king prawns and 'Bangarang' jerk-spiced halloumi and pepper, all served with homemade sunshine slaw and various condiments. Beach burgers are made from 28-day dry-aged English beef packed into freshly baked flatbread pockets, decked with grilled pineapple and smoked cheese.

The bar serves a choice selection of rums and Caribbean drinks, including Red Stripe, Carib Beer, Sasparilla and Coconut Water served in colourful hand-painted tin cans. Not to be missed is the signature 'Wray & Nephew reggae-infused rum punch'. Made with overproof rum, the punch is gravity-fed through the sound-system wall of speakers, slowly infusing it with genuine reggae soundwaves; 'bass filtering' it for a truly unique drinking experience.

20 Bedford Street, London WC2E 9HP  
0207 836 5876 | [dubjam.co.uk](http://dubjam.co.uk)  
T: @dubjambbq | FB: dubjambbq



## DUCK AND WAFFLE

You'd be forgiven for assuming that a restaurant on the 40th floor of Liverpool Street's Heron Tower pulls in punters for its incredible views over London. But you'd be wrong. Duck and Waffle has garnered a fiercely loyal following for its food, created by talented young head chef Daniel Doherty. Signature dishes such as the eponymous crispy confit 'duck & waffle' served with a fried egg and maple syrup, and foie gras crème brûlée with Scottish lobster are joined by a regularly changing menu of inventive dishes.

'Egg & bacon' features a devilled duck egg over soft slices of pig's head, cooked long and slow and infused with Korean flavours. Raw Cornish mackerel is combined with smoked vodka cucumbers, horseradish and apple and served in a bowl carved from pink salt. Baked Alaska looks like an alien life-form; it also surprises the tongue with strawberry liqueur and mint oil.

A bar area provides a welcome spot to

while away a little time before dinner. Most prized are the window tables, from which London is laid out below you like a map. Best of all, Duck and Waffle is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week - you have no excuse not to find time to visit.

Heron Tower, 110 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AY | 020 3640 7310  
[duckandwaffle.com](http://duckandwaffle.com) | T: @DuckandWaffle  
FB: duckandwaffle



## FAANOOS

Walking into Faanoos, in London's East Sheen, you could be forgiven for thinking you'd walked through a wormhole into a Middle Eastern eatery during the 1800s. Not that it looks old and outdated, far from it, but the space has an air of authenticity, right down to the wattle and daub style walls (a touch that must have been hard to achieve using modern materials).

Taking pride of place is the tanoor oven, into which a chef places hand-rolled naan breads prepared and served in the dining room itself (the oven being just inside the front door). This gives the restaurant a sense of the theatrical, as disc after disc of piping hot bread is taken and served from the scorching hot depths. Mezze is served both hot and cold, and of note here is the hummus and the mast o moosir (yoghurt with wild garlic), mopped up with the aforementioned bread.

Koobideh (minced lamb skewers) and boneless chicken (joojeh) kebabs are the mainstays of Faanoos, and offered with either bread or saffron rice. A number of side dishes are also available to accompany main dishes, such as traditional Persian pickles (torshi), pickled cucumbers, and marinated olives.

481 Upper Richmond Road, London SW14 7PU | 020 8876 8938  
[faanoosrestaurant.com](http://faanoosrestaurant.com)  
T: @faanoosrestaure  
FB: Faanoos-Restaurant



## GOGI

In 2014, Gogi won OpenTable's Diners Choice Award. Set in Little Venice's network of canals, this authentic yet adventurous Korean dining spot is a modern take on Korean 'gogi' - which simply means 'food'.



The combination of baked, exposed brick, crimson neon detailing and stark black furniture make this restaurant feel like a forge. The smell of an open grill on your table, the flash of the fat as it touches the flame – it all adds up to an experience you won't forget.

Start with miso soup, made with soybean paste, seaweed, tofu and crunchy spring onions. The other recommended route is to go traditional: the radish kimchi is refreshing, with a hot mixture of fiery chilli and garlic soaked into the soft flesh of a pickled cucumber.

Now it's time for the barbecue, and the friendly waiters recommend going for a platter, with the chance to sample as much of the meat as possible. The barbecue seafood platter contains octopus, prawns, salmon, mussels and scallops, and all cooked elegantly and skilfully before you. Alternatively, flirt with adventure: the Korean steak tartar. Delicious thinly shredded beef, seasoned with sesame sauce and served with sliced pear and egg yolk, is the perfect accompaniment to a bokbunja (Korean raspberry wine) or the Korean beer 'Hite'.

451 Edgware Road, London W2 1TH | 020 7724 3018 | [gogi-restaurant.com](http://gogi-restaurant.com)  
T: Gogi-London | FB: Gogi-London



## HAFEZ

The fact that Hafez has been doing brisk business since 1983 is testament to the restaurant's devotion to delivering a quality Persian dining experience. Head chef Farshid Ziafat has been in the industry for over a quarter of a century. It's fair to say he knows his stuff – especially when one makes that pronouncement after enjoying a full-on feast.

It's not just food traditions that are honoured here, but also the typically Persian values regarding warm hospitality and the convivial nature of sharing food. You'll be advised to share a few starters – this tip is worth heeding. Choose the 'hafez mazah', which delivers the house selection of five fine items.

The aromas emanating from a charcoal grill always make kebabs hard to resist, especially when there's the option of ordering an extra koobideh skewer to make any of the meals even more meaty. But a slow-cooked stew like gheimah allows you to savour the subtle, spicy flavours found in Persian cuisine. The best solution? Order broadly across the menu, and share the spoils.

From the concise dessert list, iced treats

feature typical tastes – rosewater, saffron, pomegranate. Or opt for something stickier in the form of a plate of Persian pastries.

5 Hereford Road, London W2 4AB  
0207 221 3167 | [hafezrestaurant.co.uk](http://hafezrestaurant.co.uk)



## HANA

In his book 'Persia' (1828) Frederic Shoberl offers the following to describe the hospitable nature of the people: 'A Persian does not keep his doors shut at meal times. He would consider himself deficient in his duty to God if he did not share his table with all guests.'

At Hana, the atmosphere certainly lives up to this observation. The team firmly believes in giving clientele a unique experience in a fun, casual and relaxing environment.

The restaurant has authenticity at its heart, with many dishes on the menu originating as far back as three thousand years. From the cold starters, try hummus and the salad Olivieh, alongside many other delicious offerings. Torshi – Persian pickles – are always a must-have, and panir sabzi offers a fresh start to any meal, consisting as it does of fresh mint, tarragon, spring onions, walnuts, radishes and salty feta cheese.

Mirza ghasemi is the pick of the hot starters, combining grilled smoked aubergine with eggs, tomatoes and garlic. There is also a fine selection from the grill, in addition to a special dish called 'baghali polow' – a slow-cooked lamb shank with saffron rice.

351 West End Lane, London NW6 1LT  
020 7794 1200 | [hanarestaurant.co.uk](http://hanarestaurant.co.uk)  
T: @HanaRestaurantX  
FB: Hana-Persian-Restaurant



## JAMAICA PATTY CO.

It seems Covent Garden has another bringer of Jamaican flavours and influence in the form of Jamaica Patty Co. This modern and stylish new gem of an eatery – the brainchild of Jamaica-born Theresa Roberts – is set to transform preconceptions about Caribbean cuisine with its contemporary but authentic approach. When it comes to menu, the stars of the show are of course those melt-in-the-mouth patties, freshly baked in-store every day, with a variety of

deliciously spicy fillings including jerk chicken, prawn, curried goat and ackee and saltfish. JPC also delivers a fantastic selection of complementary Jamaican culinary delights throughout the day from a menu created by multi award-winning Jamaican chef Collin Brown.

These include a wholesome Jamaican porridge and a shot of Blue Mountain coffee to give the morning a delicious kick-start; or pop in for a slice of seriously addictive Tortuga rum cake or banana bread with a refreshingly different, freshly squeezed coconut water or soursop juice. The soursop is native to the Caribbean and produces a uniquely tropical drink renowned for its health benefits.

Caribbean Chef of the Year Collin also delivers some mouth-watering speciality soups with a twist, including punchy pumpkin soup with a spicy kick, chicken and dumpling, and gungo pea – perfect for a healthy lunch on the go. There are also some unique and tasty treats to try, such as plantain crisps and Devon House Ice Cream (which aficionados will recognise as 'the best ice cream in Jamaica'). With a cool and contemporary interior and packaging to match, this is a first in more ways than one – it's the first of its kind in London and it's Theresa's first restaurant. As such, Jamaica Patty Co., whose passionate mission is to introduce the fresh flavour of Jamaica to as diverse a mix of customers as possible, is quite simply a breath of fresh air.

26 New Row, London WC2N 4LA  
[jamaicapatty.co.uk](http://jamaicapatty.co.uk) | T: @JamaicaPattyCo  
FB: JamaicaPattyCo



## JANE-TIRA THAI

Given the popularity of Thai restaurants in the UK, most of us think we are familiar with this Eastern cuisine, citing curries such as yellow, green, red, massaman and penang, pad Thai noodles and stir-fried rice. But if you want to seek out a wider range of Thai food, look no further than Jane-Tira Thai, a small restaurant focused on bringing popular and authentic Thai street food to Soho. The menu is divided into small and large dishes, noodles and rice; each section listing so many temptations that your first visit will quickly lead to your second and third. An order of the delightfully named 'Son-in-Law balls' brings a plate of deep-fried boiled eggs in tamarind sauce, a delight of soft and crispy, sweet and sour.

Massaman lamb is an enormous lamb shank, braised until meltingly tender in a coconut curry sauce. The mackerel curry is cooked Southern-style and is not only

packed with flavour but is so fiery hot that only the fiercest chilli-heads enjoy it. There are plenty of choices for the meeker amongst us who are looking for intensity of flavour without the heat. Try moo ping skewers of chargrilled lemongrass and coconut milk pork, suki haeng stir-fried glass noodles with seafood in a fermented tofu sauce, or a spicy Thai omelette full of vegetables and herbs, served on Jasmine rice with Sriracha sauce. Prices are impressively affordable and the setting is casual, welcoming and comfortable.

28 Brewer Street, London W1F 0SR  
020 7434 3777 | [jane-tira.co.uk](http://jane-tira.co.uk)  
@Janetira\_thai | FB: Janetira-Eat-Thai



## JUBO

Jubo is the place to go for anju. Large tables adorn the calm, wooden space where couples, connoisseurs and city boys jostle and ruminate over the best food this side of Seoul.

The 'lunchbox', if you drop in between noon and 2.30p.m., serves wonderful food on-the-go and enables you to pick a base – either kimchi fried rice, Korean glass noodles or crispy lotus root salad – a main – between Korean crispy pancakes, beef bulgogi, Korean fried chicken, or yangnyeom tongdak – and a pickle and dressing of your choosing. It all goes into your portable box of Korea and off you trot, back to the office.

This methodical, segmented approach to ordering food is echoed in the main menu – compartmentalised into simple, easy to manage sections. The ssam in particular echoes the typically Korean values of sharing and community eating. This slow-roasted, kilo portion of pork belly, covered in spring onion, sesame oil, ginger and soy, is a treat to share with friends and family (or at a saki-soaked work do). You should do all this whilst knocking back a 'sojutini' – a cocktail made with soju combined with Wyborowa, lime, agave nectar, pineapple and Angostura bitters.

For noodles, this place is truly the best. The yaka mein is fantastic, containing sliced skirt beef broth, flat rice noodles, kochukaru, spring onions, sesame and boiled egg. It all fuses together marvellously in your bowl, creating a deep, creamy soup made thicker with the dissolving yolk.

Bedroom Bar, 68 Rivington St, London EC2A 3AY | 020 7033 0198  
[jubolondon.com](http://jubolondon.com) | T: @Jubolondon  
FB: JuboShoreditch





## KANADA-YA

Founded by Kanada Kazuhiro in Japan's Yukuhashi in 2009, Kanada-Ya has won a number of awards in its home country, and now serves meticulously-crafted ramen to a London audience. Most ramen broths are created by simply boiling pork bones over a long period of time, but Kanada-Ya goes the extra mile; washing all stock bones before boiling and constantly skimming the soup during cooking in order to remove any impurities. While time consuming, this process results in a clarity of taste and appearance that sets Kanada-Ya's ramen apart from its competitors.

All noodles are made on-site, with a special machine made in Japan that uses a very specific blend of flour that's enriched with the right protein content and alkaline salts to produce a bouncy, firm noodle capable of standing up to the rich broth. Customers will also be able to request how firm they like their noodles, which will then be cooked accordingly.

Kanada-Ya's signature ramen will consist of noodles, tonkotsu broth, secret sauce (imported from the original restaurant and handmade by Mr. Kanada), wood ear fungus mushroom (kikurage), finely sliced spring onion, char siu pork belly and a sheet of nori.

Variations will include a Moyashi ramen, which introduces blanched beansprouts into the mix, and Char siu-men ramen, which replaces the standard char siu pork belly with large slices of the meatier char siu pork collar.

64 St Giles High Street, London WC2H 8LE | T: @KanadaYa\_LDN  
FB: kanadayaldn



## KATEH

Situated on Warwick Place, just a stone's throw from the chic and fashionable area of Little Venice in London, Kateh serves Persian cuisine that the proprietors claim is the very latest in this ever-popular genre.

The project is the realisation of Narges Pourkhomami's dream to offer London's residents the best of traditional and contemporary Iranian hospitality. Kateh combines authentic and modern Persian cuisine in what Narges describes as 'an elegant yet relaxed and intimate setting, seating just 75 diners.

Menus feature 33 dishes on a daily basis with inspiration taken from the pick of the day's market produce. The restaurant has private dining for up to 12 people and also benefits from a garden terrace – available with a late license for up to 25 guests.

The menu, pleasingly, features the classic Persian stew ghormeh sabzi – a combination of veal, fresh herbs, red kidney bean, and the ever-present dried lime. Served with saffron rice, it is a dish that will satisfy whatever the weather.

Desserts are homemade and authenticity personified. Bastani, or saffron ice cream with pistachio, is top of the list, which also features faloodeh – a Persian rice noodle sorbet served with fresh lime juice.

5 Warwick Place, London, W9 2PX  
020 7289 3393 | katehrestaurant.co.uk  
T: @KatehRestaurant  
FB: Kateh-Restaurant



## KIMCHEE

An elegant, traditional Korean restaurant in the heart of our bustling capital, Kimchee is in its third year. Owner Dong Hyun Kim's began a new 'legitimate' food experience here, and now it has sky-rocketed into an established hangout for Korean natives and adventurous foodies alike.

Ancient Korean artifacts and paintings adorn the walls and walkthroughs, with little faux ponds and gold murals camped up alongside the modern glass interior. Kimchee is named after a popular side dish in Korea. The theme of the overall restaurant is barbecue – the smoky, aromatic flavours off a juicy rib, joint or steak is what gets people in Seoul ticking, and so Kimchee has built a large charcoal barbecue in the kitchen.

For a starter, it would be rude not to sample a kimchee – a soft, layered morsel made of pickled Chinese cabbage, garlic and chilli. Or alternatively, attack the bap – sticky rice, ideal for soaking up leftover liquid from soups or stews – like the house dolsoot bibimbap.

If you like noodles, sample mul naengmyeon; chilled buckwheat noodles in an authentic, fruity sauce, with pickles, tender marinated beef, pickled radish, Asian pear and a boiled egg.

Fish fans must try the fragrant gui – lemon sole, mackerel or salmon drizzled with Korean barbecue sauce, served with grated radish and wilted spinach in a sweet potato basket. Piecing together a meal is always fun, so throw in some chargrilled broccoli or scallops to transform your meal into the seas and sounds of Korea, and wash it all down with a Silk Hye – an ice-cold rice beverage.

71 High Holborn London WC1V 6EA  
020 7430 0956 | kimchee.uk.com  
T: @KIMCHEERest | FB: Kimcheeholborn



## LAVASH

The 'Lavash' of the restaurant's title is a thin Persian bread; but if you mistakenly heard the name as 'Lavish', you'd not be let down. Service is attentive, the cosy atmosphere is family-friendly, and portions definitely err on the 'generous' side. Thankfully, the buzzy atmosphere does not distract one from appreciating the food.

The dining room's decor may be in a contemporary style, but the menu offers all the classics of Persian cuisine. A selection of dips shared between your party is a pleasant way to begin – try hummus; mirza – an aubergine, garlic and tomato melange; and the grilled courgette and yogurt salad, 'boorani', all served with fresh house-made bread.

It's hard to choose between rice specialties like tadin – a dish of chicken-and-aubergine-stuffed oven-baked rice, heaping helpings of flavoursome stews, or kebab combinations like the 'Momtaz', which delivers one skewer each of marinated fillet of chicken and minced lamb. Sabzi polo mahi – seabass served with herby rice, is equally tempting. Mast khyar, a thick, raita-like yogurt relish, is a tasty side.

A dense halva cake is a very indulgent finale, but ends a meal at Lavash on a note that's sufficiently sweet to complete with the rest of the experience.

8-10 Monkville Parade, London NW11 0AL  
020 8905 5353 | lavash.co.uk



## LIMA FLORAL

Lima Floral is the second venture of Peruvian chef Virgilio Martinez and his partners, Gabriel and Jose Luis Gonzalez, and follows on from the success of the Michelin-starred Lima. The menu showcases an equally impressive selection of Peruvian classics and some unique ingredients.

Head chef Virgilio Martinez sources ingredients from the UK as well as introducing diners to exciting new Peruvian elements, creating one of London's most unique dining experiences within a venue that exudes South American charm. Signature Lima dishes sit alongside a menu of challenging Peruvian cuisine aimed at helping customers discover new flavours.

Sea bream ceviche was the standout favourite amongst starters, and mains were equally well thought out. A deep bowl of beef suadado burst with flavour; simply - and beautifully - accentuated by heritage tomatoes and fresh coriander. All the desserts are unusual, but the meringue-based suspiro ardiente is something that everyone should try.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a South American restaurant, Lima Floral has a rather extensive cocktail list, along with an impressive selection of regional reds. Staff are endlessly helpful and polite. A visit will impress even the city's most seasoned foodies who will appreciate the precise level of attention to detail that has gone into each flavour combination.

14 Garrick Street (Floral Street entrance), Covent Garden, London, WC2E 9BJ  
0207 240 5778 | limafloreal.com  
T: @lima\_london | FB: limarestaurant



## LITTLE PERSIA

The dining room at Little Persia is a cosy place to while away an afternoon or evening, and, happily, the food is as pleasant as the surroundings. The traditional Persian furnishings and knick knacks, star-shaped coloured-glass lanterns, and a warm palette of desert-sunset colours make it feel more like you're eating out in the Middle East than West London.

Do as they do in Persia, and ponder the menu over a plate of panir sabzi; enjoying explosive mouthfuls of peppery radish, joltingly-fresh herbs, and creamy feta cheese. After extensive contemplation, you'll probably plump for mixed starters and fresh, stone-baked naan.

It's a shame that the main course menu does not offer a similar selection. Instead, you'll have to face the ever-present quandary of Persian cuisine: grill, rice, or stew? If you go with the former then a mixed grill offers the chance to sample a good range of meats. The chicken-and-rice dish zeresht polo, studded with sweet-sour barberries, is a perennial favourite, as is the stew that combines lamb, fried aubergine and creamy, earthy split peas.

As a final flourish, take tea and baklava in the tented alfresco dining area, and relish the traditional Persian atmosphere just a little longer before you return to reality.

38 Queensway, London W2 3RS  
020 7243 8288 | littlepersia.co.uk  
T: @LittlePersiaRes  
FB: Little.Persia.Restaurant





## MANOUSH CUISINE

The in-house, live-action bread-baking is a major feature at Manoush Cuisine. Indeed, so committed is the restaurant to sharing knowledge about the staple in Persian cuisine that the website has a section devoted to discussing the different types. It follows, then, that you should start with little dishes eaten with fresh, fluffy discs of sesame-studded naan.

Various mezze selections mean you can try small portions of several items; a quartet of dips, perhaps. Add a few items like dolmeh, cheese-filled sambousek pastries, a fatoush salad, and the spicy potato dish, batata harra, and you've almost made a meal – but don't miss mains.

If you're feeling a little full, just take pause and soak up the atmosphere of the lantern-lit restaurant before placing your order. Looking at the lengthy list will buy you a few more minutes to build your appetite afresh for a plate that might be filled with anything from baby chicken on the bone to butterflied shrimp, all served with saffron rice and salad. If you prefer something with a sauce, okra stew is deep, earthy and satisfying.

Manoush Cuisine serves Persian breakfasts from 9 a.m. – although it might be wise to save the shisha for somewhat later in the day.

48 Queensway, London W2 3RY  
020 7727 6886 | [manoushcuisine.com](http://manoushcuisine.com)  
T: [ManoushCuisine](https://www.facebook.com/ManoushCuisine) | FB: [ManoushCuisine](https://www.facebook.com/ManoushCuisine)



## NAMAASTE KITCHEN

The sleek, contemporary space that Namaaste Kitchen occupies could happily house a smart venue serving any cuisine, but a quick glance at the menu immediately betrays multi-award-winning chef-patron Sabbir Karim's commitment to showcasing authentic regional Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani cuisine – albeit in a modern manner.

Start with a cocktail or mocktail – the list offers some innovative Indian-themed tipples. The restaurant's open kitchen specialises in grilled dishes; not only from the tandoor, but sigri (coal flame) and tawa (griddle) too.

The seasonal produce Namaaste Kitchen favours is especially evident on the regularly-changing Tasting Menu. The à la carte offers an tempting range of dishes from all over the subcontinent – we loved a tandoor-cooked Portobello mushroom generously filled with figs, cashew nuts, cheese, and more; and a venison kebab that's unusually – and authentically – tenderised with beetroot.

For mains, Dorset crab vindaloo is fierce yet flavoursome, whilst Lucknowi shahi kofta sits at the other end of the spectrum; the stuffed potato croquettes in a creamy, rich, subtly-spiced sauce. Tandoori pineapple is an almost-virtuous dessert, whilst the signature platter, including carrot samosa and coconut almond roll, is worth every calorie.

In order to further explore regional cuisines, Sabbir also regularly develops themed menus.

64 Parkway, London NW1 7AH  
020 7485 5977 | [namaastekitchen.co.uk](http://namaastekitchen.co.uk)  
T: [@NamaasteKitchen](https://www.facebook.com/NamaasteKitchen)  
FB: [namaastekitchencamden](https://www.facebook.com/namaastekitchencamden)



## ON THE BAB

Owner Linda Lee's On the Bab has all the trappings of a stylish eatery. But despite the minimalist surroundings and a young, hip customer base, On the Bab – which means 'on the rice' – is a victory of substance over style.

After starting Korean restaurants Koba in the West End, and Nizuni near Goodge Street, Lee started her newest Shoreditch venture by concentrating more on Korean street food influences. Indeed, the interior is bare brick, funky and interspersed with foliage. It is casual, and specialises in the food Koreans love the most: kimchi arancini, steamed buns and spicy seafood stews.

Everything is authentic, and the flavours are new and exciting. Try the kimchi pancake to start, perhaps with a side order of saeng dubu (fresh tofu with soy sauce, topped with spring onion and toasted seaweed). The mains are where the magic happens. Bibimbap, a stew of rice, vegetables, fried egg, gochujang and your choice of bulgogi beef; spicy chicken or pork, sits perfectly with the various liquors that accompany it. These include seoljoongmae, or plum soju. If you want a more zealous concoction, hit 'Soju Breeze', a light cocktail of piercing soju, tangy grapefruit, cranberry juice and lime.

There are more traditional dishes on offer if you are a purist: Kimchi bokeum bab (a Korean kimchi paella complete with

fried egg) is a firm favourite in Korea. But everything is worth a try, and On the Bab certainly presents the intense flavours of Korea to the Western palate.

305 Old Street, London EC1V 9LA 020 7683 0361 | [onthebab.com](http://onthebab.com)  
T: [@Onthebab](https://www.facebook.com/Onthebab) | FB: [Onthebab](https://www.facebook.com/Onthebab)



## OPSO

Greek-inspired Opsos is set in the heart of Marylebone, and the restaurant draws on the tastes and produce of Greece to deliver a range of dishes inspired by the Mediterranean.

Opening at 8am during the week, breakfast is a relaxed affair with freshly baked pastries to eat in or take out and coffee provided by London's original single-origin coffee specialists – Coming Soon Coffee. There are also heartier dishes such as tsoureki – a brioche-style bread flavoured with aromatic Greek spices, served with clotted cream and sour cherries; Earl Grey-infused rice porridge; and moustokouloura – a soft cookie made of sweet dough with grape molasses from the island of Crete.

The social eating experience that is such a large part of life in Greece is reflected on the menu in the form of sharing platters, like the 16-hour slow-cooked lamb shank for two, served with orzo and tomato jam. The dessert menu ranges from simple vanilla cream with fresh berries and crispy phyllo and lime zest, to loukoumades, fried Greek donuts infused with thyme honey and served with fragrant kaimaki ice cream and shaved walnuts.

10 Paddington St, London W1U 5QL  
020 7935 0551 | [opso.co.uk](http://opso.co.uk) | T: [@OPSO\\_london](https://www.facebook.com/OPSO_london) | FB: [OPSO](https://www.facebook.com/OPSO)



## ORKIDEH

The covered nature of Orkideh's dark wood terrace means you can eat alfresco at any time of year. It might face the Finchley Road, but admiring the abundant plant-life and wall-mounted patterned crockery that surrounds you will soon transport you somewhere altogether more exotic. Inside, traditional Persian rugs and a large samovar on the bar provide more classic cultural references.

Ash-e-reshteh is a starter for those who come hungry and crave hearty fare; a steaming bowl of yogurt-and-mint noodle soup packed with beans and vegetables. A comprehensive range of hot and cold items are equally tempting, but the huge piles of herbs, walnuts and fresh cheese that the panir sabzi comprises are hard to resist.

Orkideh's main course menu is split into grills and stews – with everything accompanied by the obligatory saffron rice. From the former, makhsoos offers you the chance to sample boneless chicken and minced lamb kebabs on a single platter. Stews include the fruit-and-nut sauced chicken fesenjan and the vegetarian gormeh sabzi – a mix of herbs, kidney beans and dried lime.

Saffron-scented ice cream makes a fine finish, as do a few sinful, sticky squares of Persian baklava – especially when washed down with a pot of Persian tea.

746 Finchley Road, London NW11 7TH  
020 8731 9921 | [orkideh.co.uk](http://orkideh.co.uk)  
T: [OrkidehLondon](https://www.facebook.com/OrkidehLondon)  
FB: [orkidehpersianrestaurant](https://www.facebook.com/orkidehpersianrestaurant)



## PENKUL & BANKS

Penkul & Banks is a modern eatery offering a buzzing environment and neighbourhood attitude, serving modern tapas and sharing plates with a casual and vibrant all-day experience.

Head Chef Matt Bishop draws on his experiences from London and Hong Kong and produces simple modern European dishes with a Far Eastern twist. Dishes range from the popular prawn and pineapple toastie with Korean hot sauce to Kimchi, apple and bacon salad, via sirloin steak with pickled shiitake.

Owner Richard Wynne took inspiration from two the craftsmen whose furniture workshops were sited at 77-79 Curtain Road at the turn of the century, and this is reflected in both the design and his focus on sourcing great basic ingredients and carefully crafting them into beautiful dishes and drinks.

The bar serves small batch American and local London craft beers alongside carefully crafted classic cocktails, such as the unique Penicillin (Johnnie Walker Black, Lagavulin, honey, ginger, and lemon) and a old-time favourite, Clover Club (Bombay Sapphire, raspberries, lemon, sugar, and egg white).

77 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3BS  
020 7729 2966 | [penkulandbanks.co.uk](http://penkulandbanks.co.uk)  
T: [@PenkulandBanks](https://www.facebook.com/PenkulandBanks)  
FB: [PenkulandBanks](https://www.facebook.com/PenkulandBanks)





## POND DALSTON

Pond Dalston brings New Hawaiian cuisine to London for the very first time – in the perhaps unlikely setting of Dalston in East London. Hidden in a warehouse along a private lane at the heart of the vibrant neighbourhood, Pond's innovative menu draws on Hawaii's central Pacific location, fusing the food of nearby countries with local traditions and ingredients.

Everything at Pond is conceptualised around the Hawaiian word 'aloha' – which means variously 'hello', 'goodbye', and love for your brother, sister, partner and, most importantly, for your planet. As such, the menu will remain as local as possible, ever-changing with the seasons and presenting the best of land, sea and soil that the country has to offer.

Owner Byron Knight describes the menu as a fine-dining blend of traditional Hawaiian food with the best European cooking techniques, featuring dishes from Hawaii's main immigrant communities – Chinese, Japanese and Filipino.

In line with the 'aloha' philosophy, Knight and his head chef Frog Wong have designed a menu laden with dishes unique to Hawaiian cuisine, such as whole catfish with citrus ponzu, Maui charcoal avocado with macadamia salted coconut crème and Kalua pork with pickleback slaw.

For light diners, Pond's sushi bar offers a list of 'poke', a Hawaiian dish that is somewhere between sashimi and ceviche – the likes of which, Knight assures, London hasn't tasted before.

3 Gillett Street, London N16 8JH  
020 3772 6727 | pond-dalston.com  
T: @ponddalston



## SHOCHU LOUNGE

Located in the Fitzrovia neighbourhood of London, on Charlotte Street, Shochu Lounge, a venue famous for its modern Japanese cocktail creations and distilled shochu infusions, has taken on a new midweek energy with quick, casual, daytime dining at its 'Shochu Kanteen'.

On the menu? Shredded lamb shoulder hirata buns with Korean chilli and pickled cucumber and steaming bowls of Tokyo-style soy ramen with cha siu pork, bamboo shoots and soft egg; or miso ramen with corn, spring onion and sesame seeds. Lighter bites also feature – including prawn and asparagus gyoza with chilli ponzu and Japanese-inspired salad selections such as edamame and mixed beans with chilli and bonito flakes. For dessert, dori yaki pancakes with various fillings like tonka bean cream and daily-changing 'tsubo' pots such as chocolate-soy and vanilla-peanut are on offer. For an instant vitamin kick, nutritious fresh juices are virtuous alternatives to Shochu's cocktails.

Grab a bowl, mix it up, and create your own in this fast-paced, accessible and fun Japanese-style Kanteen. All dishes are prepared and cooked daily by the chefs in the on-site kitchen.

37 Charlotte Street, London W1T 1RR  
020 7580 6464 | shochulounge.com  
T: @shochu\_lounge | FB: shochulounge



## SPICE MARKET

Executive chef Peter Lloyd serves his critically-acclaimed eclectic Asian-European fusion cuisine in Leicester Square's W Hotel. His inspiration comes from combining influences from travels to Southeast Asia and past experiences of cooking a more traditional offering.

Spice Market's style of food service and sharing concept lends itself perfectly to group gatherings – suiting friends and families who want to catch up over cocktail pitchers and graze through the a comprehensive menu broken into categories that make it easy to navigate – but not easy to choose.

Even the most classic dishes bear an Asian influence – sweet potato and cashew sticky buns and home-made lemongrass yoghurt with mango and sesame granola at brunch; or, perhaps, black pepper steak with ginger-fried egg and pandan waffles with salted caramel and pineapple.

Misoyaki roast baby chicken with shoyu onion sauce provides a good hit of umami, demonstrating culinary experimentation as true artform. Spice Market clearly understands how to achieve the right balance of flavours, no matter how unorthodox a dish may appear.

W London Hotel Leicester Square, 10 Wardour Street, London W1D 6QF  
0207 758 1088 | spicemarketlondon.co.uk  
T: @SpiceMarketLDN  
FB: Spice-Market-London



## TAPAS REVOLUTION

Omar Allibhoy has been obsessed with food for his entire life. With Tapas Revolution, he aims to bring classic, simple Spanish dishes to a wider audience across the UK. The first two branches are located in Westfield and Bluewater shopping centres, but I'm sure it won't be long before the neo-chain spreads further. Although the drinks list offers wine and beer, it's particularly exciting on the soft drink front – homemade lemonade has a touch of saffron to balance to sweet-sharp citrus; horchata, made from tigernut tubers, is a new taste for me – unusual but an excellent thirst quencher. Mosto is a non-alcoholic sweet grape juice that's startling for its intensity of flavour. Everything on the food menu appeals, but don't miss acorn-fed Iberian ham, sweet smoky charred pimientos de Padrón or the excellent ham croquetas with a crisp crumb exterior giving way to gooey ham-flecked béchamel.

The Balcony, Westfield London, London W12 7SL (other branch at Bluewater)  
tapasrevolution.com | T: @tapasrevolution  
FB: tapasrevolutionlondon



## THE PALOMAR

Soho's Palomar is brought to you by siblings Layo Paskin (yes, he of 'Layo and Bushwacka!' fame) and Zoe Paskin, who both previously ran London nightclubs The End and AKA, who decided to team up with the chefs of Jerusalem's coolest restaurant, Machnevuda – Yossi Elad, Uri Navon and Asaf Granit. Palomar's kitchen is headed by Tomer Amedi and specialises in Middle-Eastern food, most notably from Jerusalem's vibrant food scene. Other influences include southern Spanish, Italian, and North African cuisines.

An 18-cover 'raw bar' at the front of the venue will serve oysters, ceviche and other raw fish items without taking bookings, while the 34 – cover restaurant at the back will serve grilled meats and fish from a Josper oven. The menu also features both Yemen-influenced dishes and European fare like risotto and fresh pasta.

34 Rupert Street, London W1D 6DN  
thepalomar.co.uk | 020 7439 8777  
T: @palomarsoho  
FB: thepalomarrestaurant



## TOHBANG

Westerners read the name of this Clerkenwell Road restaurant and think of an extremely painful experience, but dining at Tohbang elicits only pleasure. In Korean, 'Tohbang' means 'larder', a trove of seafood, vegetables and sweet treats that were locked behind a heavy wooden door.

The aim of this room was simple: to keep food fresh and hidden from youngsters. Only the housewife would hold the key, and it would only be opened for meal times. At Tohbang, the aim is also to unlock a treasure chest of Korean cuisine – just this time, everyone has a set of keys.

Tohbang features a simple set menu, with broth and barbecue sections accompanying soups, rice and main dishes. For an overall experience of the restaurant, and Korea in particular, head to the set menu section, where you can feast on three sets of food. The first, Set A, is the most popular, not least because it appears first on the menu – but because it contains a generous allowance of bulgogi, ojing-o bokum – a stir fry of fresh squid and vegetables in chilli sauce, and bokum bab. All sets are accompanied with kimchi, modum namal (three vegetables seasoned Korean-style), pa jeon – a spring onion pancake with mixed seafood and vegetables – and miyeok kuk, a clear soup served with seaweed and spring onions.

All the dishes are very well-priced and the low buzz of activity means the place is always lively, but never too busy; meaning a laid-back, delicious evening is on the cards.

164 Clerkenwell Rd, London EC1R 5DU  
020 7278 8674 | tohbang.com  
FB: TohbangLondon



## TING

TING is located on the 35th floor of The Shard. Overseen by executive chef Emil Minev, it presents a modern European menu that combines the best locally-sourced British ingredients with subtle Asian influences. In all honesty, the food is not the main attraction here. It's all about the view.



Once the rather unique environment has sunk in, attention turns to the menu: just six starters and six mains, an exercise in restraint. A starter of diver-caught scallops with ginger, coriander, mandarin and heritage carrots was elegantly presented and wonderfully coherent in flavour.

A main of Rhug Estate organic lamb loin, served with mirin, sake, ereingi mushroom and green apple combined the traditional flavours of quality roasted lamb with the Japanese alcohols, making for a flavour that was both unique and interesting.

For dessert, a rosewater parfait was a smorgasbord of culinary bravado – and it worked. The terroir-driven wine list features a variety of both familiar and lesser-known grapes, and cocktails are well-mixed. Service is both unobtrusive and flawless. A meal here doesn't come cheap, but it seems right that a visit be reserved for a special occasion. Visiting too often would take away the awe; and awe, after all, is what TING is all about.

Level 35, The Shard, 31 St Thomas Street, London SE1 9SY | 020 7234 8108  
ting-shangri-la.com | T: @ShangriLaShard  
FB: TheShardLondon

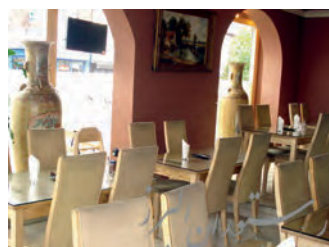


## YALLA YALLA

Lebanese, and other Middle Eastern cuisines, are often reduced to little more than a source of grilled meats and kebabs (in restaurants with faux-Bedouin decor and filligree metal lanterns). It wasn't until a foodie holiday to Lebanon that I discovered quite how much of a disservice this does the cuisine. The Lebanese love to eat and, more importantly, they love to cook and to feed others.

Many of the dishes at Yalla Yalla will be familiar – glistening strips of shawarma lamb on a generous serving of hommos, smoky chargrilled aubergine baba ghanouj, halloumi with tomato, olives, mint and olive oil, and juicy grilled pieces of marinated meat. But Yalla Yalla also offers homemade soujouk – a spicy sausage I learned to make in a house in the hills above Beirut; kibbe lahme – deep-fried parcels of lamb, cracked wheat, onions and pinenuts; and lamb sfiha – a meat-topped pastry reminiscent of ones I ate hot out of the oven in a tiny butcher-bakery by Baalbek. Best of all is the chicken taouk wrap, filled with grilled chicken, pickled cucumber and toum garlic sauce. Like an honorary Beirut, insist on extra toum – but make sure you don't have any meetings afterwards!

12 Winsley Street, London W1W 8HQ  
020 7637 4748 | yalla-yalla.co.uk (Other branches via the website)  
T: @YallaYallaUk



## ALBORZ

Alborz, on Stockport Road in Manchester, is what could be termed as brilliantly simple. The chefs do not shy away from simplicity and therefore the flavours within their cooking tend to speak for themselves.

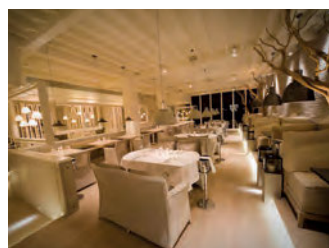
On entering the restaurant you will notice the slightly 70s-style glass tables, but the décor and tiled floor give the space a more modern feel. Bright and airy, it encourages diners to relax in anticipation of the meal to come.

Traditional Persian stew abgusht (literally 'water meat') tops the list. Fatty mutton is cooked on the bone with chickpeas, white beans and potatoes, and the dish is served in stages (similar to some Italian dishes); with the soup being eaten first with bread, followed by the meat and vegetables.

Also on offer are a range of beautifully grilled kebabs, from koobideh and bargh (tender lamb pieces), to lamb tikka and chicken shish.

Ash reshteh is another dish on offer at Alborz – a thick Persian soup made with lentils, chickpeas, white beans, pinto beans, fresh herbs, noodles and thick whey (kashk). This hearty bowlful will save the healthiest of appetites.

820 Stockport Rd, Manchester M19 3AW  
0161 224 4111 | alborzrestaurant.co.uk  
FB: ahaghanian



## AUSTRALASIA

Manchester was once the largest cotton producer in the world. In colonial Australia, they used to get so much of the stuff, in labelled boxes, that locals started calling their bed sheets 'Manchesters'.

But now, the reverse is happening. Australia is bedding into Manchester, as Australasia – an odd, yet alluring taste of the billabong – sets up shop in the Mancunian landscape.

You can order two ways at Australasia. Either you go for the traditional starter and main method – or you go maverick and order a cache of sharing dishes. For the latter, thumb through the list which includes nigiri sushi, yellowfin tuna sashimi or Loch Duart salmon. Alternatively, kick off your taste odyssey with California rolls like the smoked duck 'Dragon roll'; made either with avocado, shiso and carrot, or roast salmon and sour plum – both superb flavour combinations.

The menu has been devised by head chef Paul Greening, whose love for fusion food won him the Young Australian Chef of the Year award. So expect sashimi to join hands with Collingwood dinkies, or octopus with pickled hijiki and watermelon to accompany black cod roasted in hoba leaf. Traditional European cuisine is also fused with Pacific Rim influences, such as Japanese, Australian, Indonesian and Southeast Asian.

After eating, swerve to the bar's great wall of spirits – each available to be blended into a cocktail of your choosing. The bar's menu also eases the gap between European and Australasian fare, with crunchy, warm prawn tempura, or a side-helping of sushi and sashimi willing to partner with that European beer you've ordered in a panic at the sheer choice on offer.

1 The Avenue, Spinningfields, Manchester M3 3AP | 0161 831 0288  
australasia.uk.com | T: @AustralasiaMcr  
FB: Australasia.Manchester



## CACHUMBA

Having opened in 1993, Cachumba has offered quality, adventurous Sri Lankan, Malaysia, Burmese, Vietnamese, Thai and African cuisine ever since.

The restaurant champions relaxation and fun, with a friendly and unimposing interior. Fusing good food, irrespective of origin, is the restaurant's mantra, with Vietnamese prawn fried rice saddling Penang chicken and potato, or any number of weird, wonderful pairings.

Such simple dishes turn the space into a communal, sharing environment, with families feasting on large platters of Javanese fish curry, mopping up the spicy, coconut-rich soup with khubz bread – a staple bread of Moroccan cuisine.

When you eventually get through your healthy portion of saag paneer, revel in the British-inspired sweets like mango and berry crumble – a thick, syrupy variation

on the classic – which rub shoulders with gajar halwa; a rich, sumptuous Indian carrot dessert.

220 Burton Rd, Manchester M20 2LW  
0161 445 2479 | cachumba.info  
T: @Cachumba1993  
FB: cachumba.didsbury



## RAYHOON

Located on St. Petersgate in Stockport, Rayhoon believes that fragrance plays a vital role in the enjoyment of Persian food, along with great presentation to make the food appeal to all the senses.

The dark leather chairs, chunky tables, and light wooden flooring in the dining room give the restaurant a good balance of contrasts in which to enjoy your meal. Tables are not tightly packed, providing the welcome feeling of space that can sometimes be lacking elsewhere.

Stews are abundant here, with eight varieties available to try. Ghormeh sabzi is present as expected, but others also catch the eye. Fesenjan, made here with duck, holds particular appeal. The tender meat is served with a blend of crushed walnuts and pomegranate molasses, accompanied with rice.

Vegetarians are also catered for – a stew combining carrot, courgette, aubergine, potato and soya beans with tomatoes and Persian spices is one offering.

Salads, mezze and grills also abound, with a number of well thought-out side dishes and a small selection of desserts to finish – baklava (a layered pastry combined with crushed nuts, sugar syrup and honey) is a particularly nice way to finish your meal.

34 St Petersgate, Stockport SK1 1HD  
07542 077774 | rayhoon.com  
FB: rayhoon.manchester



## VERMILION

There were days in the nuclear winter of 1930's Mancunian cuisine where it would be difficult to find one decent Indian restaurant in the city. Nowadays there is a restaurant called Vermilion, which not only delivers this, but then throws in premium Thai and Japanese cuisine in the same sitting.



This restaurant-cum-bar in the heart of Manchester is drowned in the vermillion afterglow of red lampshades, while tables, cocoons, galleys and orbs that coagulate to form a subterranean playground of sensation and flavour.

On Fridays and Saturdays, the space morphs into a disco; an arena of Thai, Indian and South Asian influences as cool and fresh as a pak choi. On the menu, you are welcomed by an exquisite and inviting bundle of potential combinations, crowned with a canon of soups including tom yam khoong – a spicy, clear soup laden with fresh, fat river prawns, Thai herbs and roasted chillies.

Further down the menu, we approach an extensive mains list featuring an inspired fish selection: rock lobster, stir-fried in black pepper sauce; or salmon yang, with grilled Scottish salmon marinated in lemongrass, garlic, and coriander paste, served with buttered vegetables and a lemon butter sauce.

Alternatively, simply soak up the atmosphere with a Kir Royale – a cocktail made with crème de cassis and a nest of fresh blackberries floating on a froth of Champagne or a 'Cinnabar Crush' – vodka, fresh raspberries, a dusting of ground black pepper and cucumber, topped with Prosecco. Vermilion's new menu boasts a street food-inspired concept alongside an ever-rotating weekly menu aimed to bring the flavours and colours of South Asian street food to your plate.

Lord North St/Hulme Hall Lane,  
Manchester M40 8AD | 0161 202 0055  
vermilion.uk.com | T: @Vermilionuk  
FB: Vermilionandcinnabar



## YANG SING

In a delightful Grade II building on Princess Street sits Yang Sing, founded in 1977 by the travelling Yeung family. The restaurant's name comes from the phonetic translation of names of the city of Guangzhou in Southern China – 'The City of Rams'.

Tim Kwan Yeung, the founder of Yang Sing, was a renowned dim sum chef in Manchester's Chinese culinary scene even before the restaurant was established. And you can see why – his famous dumplings come packed with a unique variety of fillings.

You can choose from the delicious steamed balls of prawn, spicy pork and nuts; or try the à la carte specials, such as crabmeat and egg with noodles, or crispy-

fried ribs in butter and chopped garlic. Harry Yeung is the head chef these days, and he combines classic Chinese flavours with European produce: squid, pork and ox – the latter in the ox tripe with green peppers in black bean sauce chow mein, offering up a fantastic tangle of flavours and textures.

If awards are anything to go by, Yang Sing's Tiered Pagoda Award, awarded by the Legacy of Taste competition in 2014, proves the quality of Manchester's very own dim sum house. Yang Sing also offers the chance for customers to learn traditional Chinese cookery techniques at cookery classes, but spaces are few and should be booked well in advance. It seems that everyone wants a slice of this restaurant's expert advice.

34 Princess St, Manchester, M1 4JY  
0161 236 2200 | yang-sing.com  
T: @yangsingmcr | FB: Yang-Sing



## DABBAWAL

Jesmond's Dabbawal specialises in small, tapas-style servings of the snacky dishes one might expect from a venue that styles itself as a place that showcases the majesty of India's street food. The atmosphere of the buzzing restaurant is fittingly colourful and vibrant, with an open kitchen that allows diners to take in the wonderful aromas that waft across the room every time the chefs spring into action.

Drinks are no less exciting - Dabbawal serves both sensational contemporary cocktails and well-executed lassis to complement a variety of the tangy, fresh chaats or tandoori dishes you'll enjoy as much as we did. Do not miss the Punjabi chicken lollipops, or the very tasty masala dosa.

1 Brentwood Mews, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 3DG | 0191 232 5133  
dabbawal.com | T: @Dabbawal  
FB: Dabbawal



## ELECTRIC EAST

Ever been to Cambodia, Vietnam or Thailand? Well head on up to the 'Toon' and eat at Electric East, a restaurant which plays on the Southeast Asian obsession with scallops, peanuts and fiery chillies – all in the locale of Alan Shearer.

Cunningly, the guys at Electric East have offered starters served in a tapas style, enabling you - the hungry customer - to consume as many flavours as possible without spoiling the main course. Sample miso and ginger-spiced lamb balls with vermicelli noodles; or, Thai sweet chilli coconut and Tiger beer mussels. Scooping the mussels out of the sweet, tangy sauce is a delight.

For next-to nothing, you can order a large side of sticky rice which you dig out with large spoons and enjoy with something like the Electric East seafood trio served on pumpkin purée with coconut-ginger sauce. Or try Korean barbecue bulgogi sirloin steak served with kimchee pickle and hand-cut chips. With every dish you get a real feast – just as you'd remember from the beer-laced food experiences of your gap year.

Of the desserts, the pudding that encapsulates the maverick energy of this menu is the spiced orange cake with gingerbread ice cream, served in a clear glass bowl, oozing with citrus and as heady as a tropical sunset.

St James Boulevard, Waterloo Square,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4DP  
0191 221 1000 | electric-east.co.uk  
T: @ElectricEast | FB: ElectricEast



## LUIGIKHANS

With a pun in their motto, a spring in their step and a belief that good, Punjabi cuisine can be replicated in the midst of a sodden Northern city, there's really 'naan better' than Luigikhans.

In a dimly lit, bare-brick grotto, leather sofas line the walls - as do empty photo frames. It is an interesting design, but as the menu arrives you realise this restaurant contains both style and substance. Nestled amongst classic curryhouse dishes like masala, dansak and dopiaza are the 'signature' dishes which set this little Indian restaurant apart.

Luigikhans' signature lamb, a leg of lamb marinated in the chef's special spices, is baked in a hot tandoor oven. Arriving as a succulent bundle of meat served with Afghani pilau and fresh salad, it is the pick of the menu – both heart-warming and reasonably priced.

Another meal, the 'Special nehari' – a Muslim dish of lamb shank slow-cooked in a special traditional sauce - is authentically served with sliced chillies, sliced lemon, freshly cut ginger and coriander. It is a fabulous, flavoursome meal.

In the bubbling environment, feasting on the wide disks of freshly-baked naan, you forget you are in Newcastle - or even in a restaurant. You focus on your food and listen to the music, the chatter of friends' voices and the sizzle of the frying pans in the open kitchen. Luigikhans is the perfect place to entertain family and friends.

358 Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE4 6NU | 0191 272 4937 | luigikhans.com  
T: @Luigikhans | FB: Luigi.Khans



## QUILLIAM BROTHERS

Like your tea? We bet you don't as much as the Quilliam Brothers, Newcastle's 'purveyors of finest tea'. Their idea for a Hungarian-style tea house was whisked straight from the brewing city of Budapest itself.

Three brothers from Wylam village wanted to give Newcastle an alternative to the booze culture it is often admired for. So with duffle hats, an eyepiece and a spare building - the Quilliam Brothers' created their Tea House. With over 60 types of tea – each labelled with a number and letter – they fuse the classic English tea experience and staple varieties like Earl Gray and Darjeeling with more exotic blends, such as mango and chilli, or Sicilian lemon and mint.

Their tea is served in a special china chalice, placed on the fine marble table with a delicate chink and allowed to breathe for up to a minute before the flavours unravel themselves in the hot water. The airy space is perfect, breathable and delicate. To eat, try something Hungarian: porkolt pie, for instance, a dainty pork pie filled with sour cream and sweet red cabbage.

Also, the cake – don't forget the cake. From carrot and coffee to blueberry and pistachio, cakes are made daily, freshly and are the perfect accompaniment to a bizarre, yet refreshing brew.

1 Eldon Place, Claremont Buildings,  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RD  
0191 261 4861 | quilliambrothers.com  
T: @QuilliamBros | FB: QuilliamBrothers





## THE OLD SIAM

Nestled in the shadow of Newcastle's Tyne Bridge sits The Old Siam, an authentic Thai restaurant featuring two floors of bustling bamboo, smiling waiters and the three, exquisite pillars of south Thai cuisine: meat, fish and vegetables.

Outside, the cold Newcastle atmosphere couldn't look any more unlikely to support a great Thai restaurant. But once inside, coats are pulled off and you are guided to your quarter a snug, quiet space tastefully sprigged with jutes of bamboo and foliage, creating all the atmosphere of a lush Thai rainforest.

'The true taste of Thailand' is branded on the menu's front, and boy does the food live up to the reputation. For starters, try hoy ob – steamed mussels with Thai herbs served with a hot and spicy sour sauce; or the traditional gateway food tord mo pla – spicy fishcakes served with a cool, Thai cucumber relish called ajad.

You can't stray far from the staples of Thai cuisine for your main course. Pad Thai – a classic Thai rice noodle dish stir-fried with egg, spring onions, and beansprouts, smothered in home-made sauce and scattered with ground peanuts – is Thailand's most renowned spicy stir-fry. Or try pla preaw warn, a deep-fried fish served with tomato, cucumber, peppers and onion, all combined in a classic sweet and sour sauce. All fish are freshly scooped out of local waters.

If you aren't feeling so adventurous but still want to eat well, head for an Old Siam set meal, featuring tom yum chicken (made with lemongrass, spices, lime leaves and galangal); stir-fried prawns with fresh chillies and mushrooms; chicken with ginger; and green curry with duck in coconut milk – all served with egg fried rice.

1-3 Side, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3JN  
0191 261 5590 | [theoldsiam.co.uk](http://theoldsiam.co.uk)  
FB: The-Old-Siam-Newcastle



## CALCUTTA CLUB

Calcutta Club's décor displays the same sumptuous influences of the Maharajan polo retreats of old India as London restaurant Gymkhana. Calcutta Club's founders collectively bring their 35-plus years of experience in the restaurant profession to the people of Nottingham. The brief is simple: to replicate the elegance of Maharajan retreats with the widest selection of ingredients available, where feasting (bhojan) once began when polo games had reached a finale and took prime position within the occasion to impress visiting guests.

The restaurant aims to make the dining experience memorable and enjoyable, whether in the Club Room or on the veranda, and offers recipes which draw inspiration from many of India's rich regional cuisines. These include some timeless classics and some future favourites arranged into 'first chukka', and 'second chukka' - making reference to polo. Some exciting dishes include Goan steamed mussels, boatman's fish curry and saunf gosht lamb – a prime fillet of lamb simmered slowly with garlic, ginger, coconut and fennel.

Calcutta Club's menu and variety of ingredients denote the importance of the old luxury associated with the Maharajah, and as such, the venue offers some Mediterranean-tinged dishes like crispy salmon with crushed potato, and chicken breast with roasted peppers. Calcutta Club is a memorable dining experience indeed.

8-10 Maid Marian Way, Nottingham NG1 6HS | 0115 941 4441 | [calcutta-club.co.uk](http://calcutta-club.co.uk)  
T: @TheCalcuttaClub  
FB: Calcutta-Club-Nottingham



## YAMAS

This Nottingham eatery deals in the most social of cuisines: Greek mezze and Spanish tapas. We dined on patatas bravas and a Spanish chicken stew as well as spanakopitta, panzanella salad and loukanika – a truly Mediterranean meal. While the patatas bravas lacked the fiery, garlic-laced authenticity of the real thing, the smoky loukanika sausage was cooked to perfection and was well received, as was the lightly-battered calamari.

While the décor requires a rethink, it is not enough to deter one from great value cuisine. A fine choice for a cosy catch-up over small plates with friends. Dinner for two around £40 including wine.

5 Thurland Street, Nottingham, NG1 3DR  
0115 950 1000 | [yamas.co.uk](http://yamas.co.uk)  
T: @yamastapas | FB: yamastapas



## EDAMAME

Authentic sushi and sashimi lovers look no further than Edamame, Oxford's number one Japanese restaurant. Its name, Edamame (ed-ah-ma-me), comes from the restaurant's signature dish: juicy, crackling baby edamame beans, a speciality snack in Japan.

If a quintessentially Japanese lunch strikes you as a fine idea, swing round to Holywell Street and jump in. With low ceilings and walls of soft, blushed blue the place is very Zen. There are three menus to choose from depending on time of day; one each for lunch, sushi and dinner. Sample chicken kara-age from the lunch menu – fresh, free-range chicken breast chunks marinated in soy and ginger, deep fried and served with rice and miso soup.

Or, if you're into vegetables, snack on the delicate yasai tofu itame – diced carrots, mangetout, baby corn, Oriental chives, beansprouts and tofu chunks, all stir-fried with Japanese seasoning and fish stock.

Not all the meals are this elaborate. In fact, the vibe suits the chilled dining experience, with plenty of sharing and mixing going on between the residents of each table. Try the fabled chicken katsu from the main menu, a plump chicken breast fillet that's breaded, deep-fried and served with a fruity dipping sauce. As one would expect from a fine Japanese venue, Edamame's fish dishes are a strength. Try local favourite 'satsumaage' – a selection of pan-fried Japanese fish cakes, served with Edamame's home-made sweet chilli sauce.

Sushi fans can't go wrong with the temakizushi; sushi rice rolled into small cones wrapped in nori (dried seaweed) with pickled daikon radish. This sweet-yet-fiery mouthful will have you reaching for the kappa-maki - shredded cucumber portions -, to cool the tongue.

15 Holywell St, Oxford OX1 3SA  
01865 246916 | [edamame.co.uk](http://edamame.co.uk)  
T: @edamameoxford  
FB: fans-of-edamame-oxford



## MAKAN LA

Makan La is found on St Michael's Street, a bike-clad boulevard native to the students of St Peter's College. Out the way of the heaving Cornmarket Street, and down past a charity bookshop and a pub where students gather for home-brewed beer, this Malaysian restaurant brings charm and flavour to this most English of streets.

When you sit down and order starters, opt for Makan La's har kau, or shrimp dumplings, served in a small dish. Balance them out with spring rolls – their well-portioned innards of fresh vegetables refreshing the palate. All the basics here are done well, and the polite, laconic waiters do their best to serve you without fuss.

Traditionally the English palate doesn't do too well with spices, and Makan La's menu contains a number of dishes with toned-down temperatures. That's not to say the fire has totally been extinguished. Tolkien's Mordor wasn't imagined a few metres away for nothing, and the spice-packed squid sambal kang kung – with Malaysian water spinach and shrimp cake paste cooked in chilli and tomato – contains as much heat as a newly-boiled kettle. But it doesn't sacrifice on the juicy, delicate flavours of the prawn or ferrous spinach.



Oxford, land-locked as it is, is not a renowned haven for fresh fish, but Makan La's fish curry embodies a gallant effort to bring the sea to the scholar. Spicy coconut broth contains plenty of fish pieces, the dish as strong and majestic as an Oxford rower.

6 St Michael's Street, Oxford OX1 2DU  
01865 203222 | [makanlaoxford.co.uk](http://makanlaoxford.co.uk)  
FB: Makan-La



## MOYA

Every culinary town should have a Slovakian restaurant – an unusual-yet-delicious departure from the French, Spanish or Italian staples we are so accustomed to eating. Moya was set up from the combined vision of two chefs, Richard and Ivona – Richard from the West of England, Ivona from the East of Slovakia.

Ivona wanted to recreate 'just what my mother cooks', and accordingly, Moya's menu is a mix of Slovakian heft and British whimsy that helps tame big, bold dishes. Everything is very straightforward and relaxed – 'a Slovak thing' we are assured by a friendly waiter, who helps explain the menu to us.

Usually, Slovaks would order a 'kapustnica' to start – a hearty soup of smoked pork shank, smoked sausage, sauerkraut, root vegetables, pearl barley, potatoes and wild mushrooms; served with bread to warm the inner workings from the sharp, Bratislavan cold. Simple, really, but then things get more complex. The menu offers so much choice, and once more we whisk the waiters to our table to explain the intriguing and satisfying blends of Slovakia and Britain. 'Devil's toast' is a classic example of this fusion, with home-grown Oxford sourdough bread with smoked sausage, onions, tomatoes, peppers, fresh chillies and grilled goat's milk cheese.

For mains, try rezen, a tender pork loin steak in seasoned breadcrumbs, with Slovak potato and mixed green salad. Or bean goulash, served with Slovak large purple beans, cannellini beans and mixed vegetables in a rich tomato and pepper sauce, served with buttered baby dumplings. Moya offers some welcome heart-warming simplicity with a pronounced Slovakian accent.

97 St Clement's St, Oxford OX4 1AR  
01865 200111 | [moya-oxford.co.uk](http://moya-oxford.co.uk)  
FB: Moya



## ARCHANA

Archana – meaning love and devotion – is a Balti house first and foremost, and has been so since 1985.

Having supplied the Northern Irish capital with mouth-watering fare since its early days, this quaint curry house works hard to get the basics right. It all starts with the marinade – all spices and herbs are sourced locally from around Belfast.

Then comes the dishes themselves: from basic chicken pakora – an inner fillet of Irish chicken breast battered in gram flour and deep-fried – to the tangy and spicy achari curry, which infuses lime pickles and mango chutney into a warm tomato-based sauce.

In every dish the taste of the Irish downs are tucked under its Balti collarbone.

Naturally, this gem has its regular patrons, some of whose names have found their way onto the menu. So try 'Turlough's secret karahi', a fresh leg of lamb slow-cooked in a thick medium sauce, with fresh onions, tomatoes and peppers – put on the menu, apparently, at the insistence of one loyal customer. Another – 'Tom's veg feast' – is a classic North Indian dish, featuring rajma (kidney beans) cooked in a tomato sauce with spices. We recommend a side of alu gobi with this one.

Also try the rober dober achari. Only cooked by a special few, this dish is made using fresh leg of lamb and a home-made sauce flavoured with pickling spices.

53 Dublin Rd, Belfast BT2 7HE  
028 9032 3713 | [Archana.co.uk](http://Archana.co.uk)  
T: [@archanarest](https://www.facebook.com/archanarest) | FB: Archana.Restaurant



## GINGERROOT

If you find yourself in Belfast and say the word 'curry', presumably you'll be led by the hand to the capital's premium Indian curry house, Gingerroot. But beware, this place is in high demand and booking is essential.

This family-run restaurant is Great Victoria Street's curry factory. Set in clean surroundings, the food is as varied and exciting as India's countryside. If you're not picky, bank on the Gingerroot Special: a selection of chicken pakora, seekh kebab, and chicken and lamb tikka. Or, start with a king prawn puri – a succulent, prawn cocktail of mild and sweet spices served atop a fried flatbread.

For vegetarians, the menu is extensive, taking advantage of India's rich vegetable heritage. The vegetable or paneer pakoras – the latter made from home-made cottage cheese, marinated in spices and deep-fried in chickpea flour prove a spectacular choice.

For your main, why not try the salmon fish curry – quite simply salmon marinated in spices, served with fresh naan bread and pilau rice. The chef's recommendation is the Moghlai chicken, an authentic dish made with tender pieces of chicken, lamb mince, and egg.

73 - 75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast  
BT2 7AF | 028 90 313124  
[gingerroot.com](http://gingerroot.com) | [@Gingerroot\\_GVS](https://www.facebook.com/Gingerroot_GVS)  
FB: TheGingerrootIndianRestaurant



## THE BOATHOUSE

Head chef at The Boathouse, Joery Castel, once cooked for the Queen, vindicating his decision to ditch football for food as a child. Taking stock from his mother's kitchen in The Netherlands, the 2012 Ulster Chef of the Year now brings Dutch cuisine to the seaside town of Bangor.

Dutch cuisine boils down to seafood, poultry, game and seasonable vegetables. In The Boathouse, these staples are injected with a blend of intricate flavours; inspired by Southeast Asian, British, and Mediterranean cuisine.

On Castel's menu, dill-cured halibut is served with a confit of potato, tangy tomato jelly, dill cream, baby tomato, mizuna, radish, and flowers. Soy-marinated

chicken thighs are served with charred tiger prawns, atjar tjampoer, charred pineapple, satay sauce and crispy rice.

Dismiss the idea that that less is more. For dairy lovers, whipped goats' cheese and vanilla mousse is garnished with toasted hazelnuts, truffle honey, cress, smoked beetroot, beetroot meringue and beetroot puree. Castel returns to Holland and its fields of root vegetables to find the crux of his recipes, but instills a multicultural element to every dish by weaving subtle, thoughtful flavour combinations together, irrespective of origin.

The best way to sample all these dishes is with a tasting menu – either a 5-course or 7-course version, with Joery surprising and delighting his guests with an assortment of divine dishes scooped from his menu.

1A Seacliff Rd, Bangor, County Down  
BT20 5HA | 028 9146 9253  
[theboathouseeni.co.uk](http://theboathouseeni.co.uk)  
T: [@DownNewsLtd](https://www.facebook.com/DownNewsLtd)  
FB: The-Boathouse-Restaurant



## ZEN

Zen is all about Japanese and Chinese food. Meaning 'enlightenment through meditation', this cool, calm arena of oriental morsels simply bursts with innovation, excitement and grandeur.

The style here is fusion – Western and Japanese styles permeate the Chinese-dominated menu. Try the Japanese-style spring roll, filled with pumpkin and cabbage; or a pan-fried Japanese dumpling, crammed with minced chicken, Chinese vegetables and ginger.

Delve into the sushi menu, to sample the hamachi (Japanese amberjack) finely sliced and served on sticky rice with wasabi and soy sauce. For mains, continue the seafood theme with teppanyaki – a method of cooking raw fish at the table using a searing, 300-degree hot plate to 'lock in' the flavour of the meat. The fresh Irish fillet steak and Atlantic salmon are the picks of the bunch.

The star of the menu is Zen's 'speciality' range – a perfect fusion of Western, Japanese and Chinese cuisine. Deep-fried sliced monkfish tail flavoured with sweetened grapefruit and tangyang sauce is the highlight. The dish is perfect enjoyed in the small, cosy dining space where hives of couples and groups tuck into sashimi, sushi, maki rolls, salads, soups, teppanyaki and tempura.

55-59 Adelaide St, Belfast BT2 8FE  
028 9023 2244 | [zenbelfast.co.uk](http://zenbelfast.co.uk)  
T: [@ZenBelfast](https://www.facebook.com/ZenBelfast) | FB: ZenBelfast



# SCOTLAND



## ABERDEEN



### RENDEZVOUS AT NARGILE

We simply had to share the great line that was shared with us when we dined at Nargile – ‘As the Bosphorus Bridge connects Asia and Europe, Rendezvous provides a modernised menu with both Middle Eastern and Mediterranean influences.’ Aberdeen really has quite the gem in Nargile, with its warm and contemporary décor and the rare option of alfresco dining to add to the Mediterranean vibe. This is a great place for a relaxed meal any time of day - staff were very attentive and pleasant, making every effort to make us more comfortable and walk us through the menu.

Nargile uses local and authentically-sourced ingredients which you can tell are freshly-prepared on site. There is a strong focus on traditional meze dishes, and the a la carte menu also offers set banquets for groups of people at around the £25 per person mark; including a selection of hot and cold meze, marinated grilled chicken and lamb and a choice of speciality meat or fish dishes, followed by Turkish pastries.

These seemed a more reasonably-priced prospect than the individual house specialities, which were a touch more expensive. That said, the quality was exceptional with these too – the mixed kebab (comprising chicken, lamb, beef and sucuk Turkish sausage) was incredibly tender across the various meats, and the steak and prawn kebab a novel, if Westernised, dish. The fish and vegetarian offerings were also extensive, catering for all needs and making the entire experience all the more comfortable. This would make for a great dinner party with a medium-sized group of friends to catch up over meze.

106-108 Forest Avenue, Aberdeen  
AB15 4UP | 01224 323700  
[rendezvousatnargile.co.uk](http://rendezvousatnargile.co.uk)  
FB: Rendezvous-Nargile



### SHRI BHEEMA'S

Shri Bheema's is family-owned and managed, and presents authentic, pure and delicious South and North Indian food at competitive prices. In the city centre branch, Shri Bheema is very much a local restaurant in that local patrons are almost considered family. Quality, authenticity and attention to taste for western palate are pillars to the Shri Bheema's success. These traits have helped it forge a rather famous reputation which is coupled with reasonable affordability and good service.

Shri Bheema's menu features a range of dishes from all over Asia, from timeless classics of South India like dosa, idli, vada, and oothappam, to North Indian tandoori items, roti, naan and other sundries. There are also some reasonably novel dishes, such as the sweet and sour chicken lollipops, and the wide range of dosa from its simplest form through to egg and chicken variants.

One criticism could be the size and complexity of the menu, but as it is split into sections and types of dish, it allows your choice to be made a little easier. Given the success of the initial branch, a second new location has now opened. The question is, which one is better? It's worth sampling both to find out.

City Centre branch – 15-17 Belmont Street, Aberdeen AB10 1JR  
01224 645555 | Shri Bheema's at Bridge of Don – Belgownie Road, Bridge of Don, Parkway Inn AB22 8NT | 01224 821155  
[shribheemas.co.uk](http://shribheemas.co.uk)  
FB: ShriBheemasIndianRestaurant



### YOROKOBI

'Yorokobi' means 'joyous bliss' in Japanese. Chef Jang aims to serve and provide customers 'joyous bliss' with fine Japanese and Korean fine dining. Having worked in numerous high-end restaurants in both the UK and Korea, his knowledge in using fine quality ingredients allows him to demonstrate sushi and all dishes to near perfection. Though the exterior of the building is somewhat cold and disheartening, one steps inside to a room that combines warmth and ambience with elegance and consistent Japanese minimalism.

Yorokobi is an approachable, accessible route for all to try Korean and Japanese food, with guides in each area of the menu

to help along the way. If you're feeling a little lazy, allow the helpful staff to walk you through the menu, helping you decipher as to what will work for and adhere to your preferences. The sushi and sashimi are great. Not perfect, but great. The Korean dishes, though, are truly something to behold. The bulback (marinated grilled beef or spicy pork) is incredibly succulent, whilst the katsu, available with chicken or pork, really does put a well-known high street chain's version to shame.

The best way of making the most of Yorokobi would be to take a set menu and experience the various facets of it – with sushi, sashimi, katsu and tempura all available, and staple edamame beans and miso soup to start.

Of course, being in Scotland, anything other than Scotch as a whisky offering is a no-no, so there's no sign of Suntory to add to the authenticity. However, an Asahi or Sapporo beer, or perhaps some Sake, are good options to further complement this authentic Far Eastern experience.

51 Huntly Street, Aberdeen AB10 1TH  
01224 566002 | [yorokobibycj.co.uk](http://yorokobibycj.co.uk)  
FB: Yorokobi-by-CJ



## EDINBURGH



### SHILLA

Masks, glowing paper lamps and paintings of Korean life hang from the deep cave-like interior, sheltered from the bustle of Dundas Street by a big, heavy door. The eponymous Shilla was once one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea, and the longest lasting in Asian history. It was founded by King Park Hyeokgeose, who was said to have been born from an egg laid by a brilliant white horse.

Eggs are on the menu in Shilla, but they don't contain kings so much as lovely, yellow yolks which flow through kimchi bokum bab - a fried rice dish - once you pierce it. The four-chambered interior, each with its own take on Korean heritage, reintroduces the theme that Korean culture is always being adapted and translated. Dishes like scallop gu yi - chargrilled and drizzled with the chef's special sauce - are deeply traditional, playing on South Korea's history as a seafaring nation.

For mains, the vegetarian options immediately jump out. Doenjang jji gae is a soya bean broth, but its intensity is guaranteed with the motley assortment of tofu, fresh clams, seasonal vegetables and rice. The ddouk bok yi, a Korean 'youngster's favourite', also sets your taste buds alight. With rice cakes, fishcakes, and vegetables, all marinated and cooked in a tangy, chilli sauce, this dish is a simple feast that always hits the spot.

13B Dundas St, Edinburgh EH3 6QG  
0131 556 4840 | [shilla-edinburgh.com](http://shilla-edinburgh.com)  
FB: Shilla Korean Restaurant



## GLASGOW



### DAKHIN SOUTH INDIAN KITCHEN

There was a time when the inhabitants of Glasgow's Merchant City were all too familiar with the world's exotic foods and spices, with the wealthy merchants importing wares from all four corners of the globe. Today, the Merchant City hosts some of the city's more sophisticated bars, clubs and restaurants, and visitors continue to enjoy the world's ingredients introduced by the area's stylish and cosmopolitan eateries. Dakhin is located at the heart of this - it prides itself on specialising in authentic South Indian cuisine and certainly offers something a little different from Glasgow's thriving curry scene.

Walking down the city's Candleriggs, you'd be forgiven for almost walking by the restaurant's single door entrance. But on entry, you will be pleasantly surprised by an airy, contemporary and stylishly decorated venue. We were welcomed by a friendly member of staff who assured us he'd find a space for two in the lively and atmospheric dining room. Concise and comprehensive, the menu was clearly laid out: starters, seafood, lamb, poultry and vegetarian sections, plus bread and accompaniments. Each dish had a well-defined description of the ingredients, which certainly made choosing a little less complicated.

Furthermore, the friendly waiter had a fantastic knowledge of the menu which made for helpful, educated recommendations. Starters included keera j bhajji (a light vegetable fritter) and batata bonda (a light and fluffy, curry leaf-infused potato dumpling).



The wide variety of main courses made it difficult to choose but notably there was a broad range of vegetarian specialities in addition to the meat options. The kori Mangalorean kari, with its mild tomato and onion sauce, was light, delicate and not swimming in oils as some curries are. The royaly vepuda featured garlic and ginger king prawns and had a bit of bite. The paper dosa (super-thin, crisp crepe) was a great sharing side along with rice. For dessert we shared a malai kulfi: a densely creamy, custard-like dish infused with cardamom.

Overall, Dakhin had a nice relaxed atmosphere, the food was excellent and authentic, and staff friendly and efficient. If you're looking for a quiet, candlelit dinner for two, then this is not your place. However for a relaxed and informal night out, as a couple or with family or friends, you will not go far wrong.

89 Candleriggs, Merchant City, Glasgow  
G1 1NP | [dakhin.com](http://dakhin.com) | 0141 553 2585  
T: @dakhin | FB: dakhinrestaurant



## HANOI BIKE SHOP

Taking inspiration from a variety of places, the founders of Hanoi Bike Shop wanted to bring the atmosphere of travelling and great, exotic food to Glasgow; an experience usually reserved for those with wanderlust who travel to Vietnam. Glasgow's first Vietnamese restaurant is deliberately casual, without missing out on important criteria upon which quality is usually measured. The restaurant is dimly lit with lanterns, and features parts of old bicycles. The menu is designed for sharing which results in a lively and bustling atmosphere which, with a late licence, extends into the night.

The cuisine on offer is not fusion but is quintessentially, authentically Vietnamese; healthy, fresh, vibrant and exciting, yet surprisingly subtle given you can add as much or as little spice to suit preference. Fresh ingredients are evidently used and all dishes cooked from scratch, down to the peanut and chilli dip, and, according to the team, even the tofu. The French colonial influence on the Viet street foods in the stuffed baguette banh mi is very apparent, and dishes like rau mui dau phi (coriander-crusted tofu), thit lon va kim chi (pork belly and Vietnamese kimchi) and ca phung phi (fish fritters with 'red dragon' sauce) are all served with a fresh baguette, pickles, salad and fresh chillies.

The traditional broth pho is exquisite here, in variations such as hu tieu hai san (king prawn and squid in chicken pho), bun bo hue (royal spicy beef flank and pork belly in lemongrass and chilli beef broth). Then there are the incredible dishes 'from the pot', like ca thu va kimchi (ginger and mango-dressed sea bass with kimchi,

beansprout and herb salad), ca ri thit bo (spiced tamarind and coconut curry with beef flank, green beans and roasted peanuts) and bo me ham (slow-cooked ox cheek stew with water chestnut). Hanoi Bike Shop is a Viet purist's dream, yet it also makes Vietnamese cuisine hugely accessible to the people of Glasgow.

8 Ruthven Lane, Glasgow G12 9BG  
0141 334 7165 | [thehanoibikeshop.co.uk](http://thehanoibikeshop.co.uk)  
T: @hanoibikeshop  
FB: TheHanoiBikeShop



## PERSIAN PARADISE

The elaborate appearance of Persian Paradise's exterior, on the Great Western Road in Glasgow, is fitting for a venue that claims to offer a feast reminiscent of a 'Darvish fairytale'.

The dining room incorporates antiques, old Persian copper lamps, fountains and warm wooden columns, to create a reflection of what is described 'Iran's romanticism when it was known as Persia'.

The restaurant is traditionally hand-painted in rich maroon-red, turquoise-blue and sun-gold. Traditional rugs adorn the floors, giving diners a real sense of having stepped out of Scotland and into the mystic Middle East.

Kebabs and grilled meats are the focus here, and the list is extensive. Lamb and chicken are treated with care at Persian Paradise and any number of combinations can be served to you on request. Koobideh, bargh and shishlik are the meaty mainstays of the menu, along with whole baby chicken marinated in the chef's special blend of sauce and spices.

Of the stews, try the inexpensive yet rich-tasting khorosht bamieh. Tender pieces of okra are cooked in a special tomato sauce alongside pieces of lamb and green peppers. The children's menu here encourages the little ones to try something different, consisting of three choices of kebab – koobideh (minced lamb), bargh (cubed lamb) or chicken.

411 Great Western Rd, Glasgow G4 9JA  
0141 339 2170 | [persianparadise.co.uk](http://persianparadise.co.uk)



## SHOLEH

Sholeh, on Nelson Street in Glasgow, serves up exotic-yet-simple Persian food, made 'with a delicate balance of sweet and sour, hot and cold; and flavours that are so

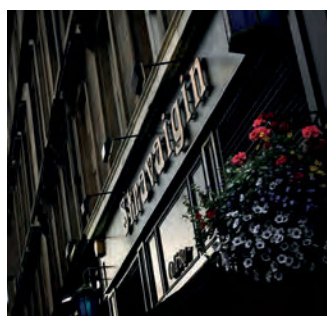
subtle in taste they will leave your palate curious for more'. From the bright neon sign without, it's an awakening experience.

The chefs on duty use only the freshest herbs, spices, fruits, flowers and ground roots in their cooking, which are paramount to the cuisine of Persia in achieving the delicate aromas and rich flavours that are synonymous with the region. Starters offer the traditional selection of hot and cold mezze dishes, with dolmeh – stuffed vine leave – being one of the picks.

Mains start with the national dish of Persia, the chelow kebab. This comprises koobideh skewers and saffron rice and is accompanied by sabzi (fresh herbs), Shirazi salad and a grilled tomato. It is finished with melted clarified butter and a sprinkling of sumac, a lemony spice essential to Middle Eastern cooking.

Also of note are the grilled-to-order lamb chops, which can be accompanied by side dishes including the ubiquitous mixed pickles (torshi) and naan bread cooked fresh in the tandoor oven.

146 Nelson Street, Glasgow G5 8EJ  
0141 429 0517 | [sholehrestaurant.co.uk](http://sholehrestaurant.co.uk)  
FB: sholehglasgow



## STRAVAIGIN

Stravaigin is synonymous with excellence in the Glasgow foodie scene, but we thought we would share it with the whole nation. 'Stravaig' means 'to wander' and encompasses the team's 'Think Global, Eat Local' ethos perfectly.

The same menu, showcasing eclectic and innovative Scottish produce, is available in both the street level cafe bar and basement restaurant of this informal eatery. Whether dining in the restaurant or 'cooied' into a café-bar nook, the friendly, informed staff is on hand to offer mouth-watering descriptions of the tried-and-tested menu and wine list.

Pop downstairs anyway for a wee look at the chefs as they prepare your meal. We speak of multicultural cuisine, and, accordingly, nasi goreng sits happily alongside haggis, mussels, Korean-style braised ox cheek and even aubergine bitterballen. Even the ice cream is accompanied by the Antipodean staple the ANZAC cookie, demonstrating the global approach. Frequent events focus on exploring various wine styles beside the incredible cuisine.

28 Gibson Street, Glasgow G12 8MX  
0141 334 2665 | [stravaigin.co.uk](http://stravaigin.co.uk)  
T: @StravaiginG12 | FB: Stravaigin

## WALES



## BRIDGEND



## BOKHARA

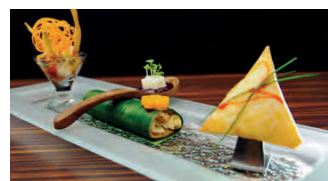
The hotel restaurant, just five minutes from the M4, has etched its own identity as a sleek, modern and colourful establishment in its own right. The team is dedicated to authenticity and excellence, and their pride in their product very evident. Awards are given pride of place across the restaurant.

Bokhara means 'warm oven' and was the dream restaurant of proprietor Vijay Bhagotra. It is a salute to his love of the food 'back home. With many of the dishes taken from the North West frontier of India, the chefs have been carefully selected and brought to Bokhara to bring a taste of the real India. Combining fresh, locally sourced ingredients with Indian spices creates delicious and noticeably rich dishes which are cooked well. For example, the order-in-advance Raan-e-Khandar is a whole leg of lamb marinated overnight, grilled in the tandoor and cooked in a fresh aromatic masala until melt-in-the-mouth succulent.

Court Colman Manor Hotel, Pen-y-Fai,  
Bridgend CF31 4NG | 01656 720212  
[bokhararestaurant.com](http://bokhararestaurant.com)  
T: @bokharabridgend | FB: Bokhara-Brasserie



## CARDIFF



## MOKSH

Patron and award-winning chef Stephen Gomes has created something rather



spectacular in Moksh, so much so that we need to share this with the rest of the nation. Set in Cardiff Bay's Mermaid Quay, in the presence of some other fantastic Indian restaurants, Moksh does something a little different.

The concept is that of bringing authentic Indian flavours with a contemporary twist almost to a magical conclusion in its presentation. The menu has a Goan influence that reflects Gomes' background, but also includes recipes from throughout India and Asia. Add in a little excitement with some dry ice and some unorthodox ingredients (chocolate and orange chicken tikka: Hyderabad minced lamb and potato with chilli beetroot foam; balchao-dusted pork belly on tomato charasa and edible paper), and the novel take on Indian authenticity is clear.

There even happens to be a jerk chicken tikka, as well as a lemongrass and pepper variant. With some other twists on regional specialities like traditional Goan fish curry and dal Bukhara (slow-baked lentils with tomato and cream), Moksh is certainly a fine dining experience to cater to both the curious and adventurous and the cautious and careful. It also offers monthly recipes for you to cook at home - a novel idea indeed.

Ocean Building, Bute Crescent, Cardiff  
CF10 5AY | 02920 498 120 | [moksh.co.uk](http://moksh.co.uk)  
T: @MokshCardiff | FB: MokshCardiff



## MY PLACE

How many times have you read about a Polish restaurant, or certainly one outside of London? Not 'polished'; Polish. Even then, how tempted have you been to sample their wares? My Place, though the name is rather uninspiring, is worthy of being read about and worthy of experiencing. The interior is very modern, but also typically Polish in its simplicity.

Many would take a look at the menu and equate low cost with poor quality, but how wrong they would be. The portions are surprisingly large and filling, but at the same time incredibly tasty. For mains, try pierogi dumplings filled with minced pork or cabbage and wild mushrooms; pork dishes - Hunter's Stew or the stew served in a potato pancake; or rye soup with smoked sausage, potatoes and a boiled egg, all served in a hollowed-out loaf of bread. You'll find pickles, potatoes and cabbages as side dishes.

The dumplings are typically filling, but are amazingly moreish and bursting with flavour, whilst other dishes flavoursome, with subtle yet enjoyable differences.

So often, we avoid Eastern European cuisine due to misguided perceptions on quality or a supposed lack of exoticism, but My Place really does offer a tasty, authentic, multicultural dining experience

without breaking the bank - even if you indulge in the vast array of vodkas on offer to complement your meal.

57 Broadway, Cardiff CF24 1QE  
02920 304029 | [myplace-cardiff.co.uk](http://myplace-cardiff.co.uk)  
FB: [myplace.cardiff](https://www.facebook.com/myplace.cardiff)



## GARUDA

Swansea also visits Indonesia Avenue with Garuda - the next stop on our culinary travels; the small restaurant offering all the broth and pints of noodles you'd expect from any clanging Jakarta café.

Introduced to Swansea in 2000, as of 2014 it remains the only Indonesian restaurant in Wales. This hasn't introduced complacency to proceedings, with owner and chef Suriyani Watcyn-Jones epitomising the union between two entirely disparate culinary traditions; even appearing on Welsh television programme 'Tastes of Wales' a few years ago.

The venue is BYOB, which adds to the casual, heated jumble of the restaurant. Peter, Ani's husband and front-of-house, greets you as your guide on your foray into a homemade Indonesian odyssey that might start with Sate ayam, (chicken skewers); wonderfully-moist and full of peanut flavour; or perhaps Pergedel Java; a stack of minced meat and potato fritters coated with egg white then deep-fried.

Gule cod is the first thing that catches the eye when you look through the list, and it both promises and delivers something exotic and different. It arrives bathed in spicy coconut milk flavoured with fresh chilli, turmeric, ginger, coriander, galangal, lemon grass, onion and salam leaf; the fresh flaky flesh well-steeped in the subtle, spicy gravy..

We are in Swansea, place of the largest indoor market in the UK and capital of Welsh fish, so another of our party ventures to try the Tauco cumi-cumi, a full squid cooked in fresh green chilli, ginger, onion, garlic, tomato and lemon grass with a yellow bean sauce. Truly delicious!

18 St Helen's Rd, Swansea SA1 4AP |  
01792 653388 | [garudarestaurant.co.uk](http://garudarestaurant.co.uk)



## KAN ZAMAN

Wood, lamplight and darkness greet customers at Kan Zaman. It is a cosy setting for Swansea's first and only Lebanese restaurant. Old oil lamps look like they could hold a genie, while the modest exterior leaves no clue of the secret labyrinth of cushions and trinkets found behind the doors.

One rule before we start on this Lebanese adventure: bring your own wine! Kan Zaman is unlicensed, so if you do require wine with your shish, dust off your claret and slip it in your handbag. It's cheaper that way.

Even though the cuisine of the Lebanon is one that's renowned for mastery of the meat kebab, vegetarians are well catered for here. A member of our group ordered the 'vegetarian meal' and was rewarded with a steaming bed of flatbread crammed with crumbly falafel and a sharp drizzle of tzatziki. If you do want to walk down kebab alley - undeniably the reason that the majority of customers are here - the lamb kofta is a delicious option; hefty and great value for money, with the juicy lamb taking centre stage on a platter of salad, fresh flatbread and cool yoghurt.

You can even try the Lebanese speciality baby chicken, which comes marinated in herbs and olive oil and served on skewers. Really, though, it's the fact that the restaurant is a simple, exotic hangout that caters for students, professionals and Lebanese natives alike that gives Kan Zaman its rare balance of charm and simplicity.

67 Brynymor Rd, Swansea SA1 4JJ  
01792 465665



## NISHIMURA

The Welsh fondness for laverbread means that nori-wrapped sushi naturally gets a rapturous reception - or, at least, that certainly seems to be the case on the occasion of our visit. The restaurant is committed to using fresh Welsh produce in its staunchly Japanese fare, and the quality shines through. It's hard not to get food envy as pretty plates of sushi and sashimi fly by.

Gunkan ('battleship') sushi delivers large pieces of rice topped with salmon roe - that saline 'pop' is most appealing. The

vegetarian in the group would disagree, but is equally enamoured with their chukka wakame version. Cone-shaped 'temaki' is fun to eat, and the textural contrast in the soft-shell crab variety makes this a standout. We also make short work of sticky, juicy yakitori skewers.

Then bigger bowls are in order, so we order unagi don - a deep dish of sticky rice topped with an unctuous hunk of eel in a sweet and salty glaze; gyoza ramen in whose savoury broth bobs not only noodles but also tender-skinned dumplings; and a pork katsu curry featuring a generous cutlet with a crisp crumb coating and a substantial slosh of that addictive Japanese curry sauce. It's not often you'll find this group pleased about a lack of dessert options, but on this occasion our full stomachs can take no more.

83 Brynymor Road, Swansea SA1 4JE  
01792 653222 | [nishimura.co.uk](http://nishimura.co.uk)  
FB: [nishimuraswansea](https://www.facebook.com/nishimuraswansea)



## RASOI INDIAN KITCHEN

Fusing the traditional and the modern with class and flair, Rasoi is not your run-of-the-mill curryhouse. The contemporary restaurant has just the right moody lighting, Indian-inspired textiles and decor, and is fitted out with a show kitchen; ensuring chefs have nowhere to hide as they put together your feast.

For 'feast' is just what a meal at Rasoi will fast become once you've glanced at the extensive and enticing menu - and we don't only think that way because it does so for us. Industry accolades and tips from satisfied diners whet our appetites even before arrival, making it necessary to order ourselves a smorgasbord of starters including a silky galuti kebab made with Welsh lamb, crisply-battered fish Amritsari, and a sterling example of that Indo-Chinese classic, chilli paneer.

But space must be saved for main courses - including a Kerala-style seafood biryani whose spicing is quite different to the North Indian biryanis commonly served in restaurants. There are well-executed 'classic' curries, but we opt for an irreverent Indian take on crispy duck - and the gamble pays off.

Masala chips tempt, but we save the calories and the space for the clever fusion puddings that look almost as good as they taste. And, after demolishing a tamarind-glazed shrikhand cheesecake and a warm carrot fudge cake, we're glad we did so.

192 Bryntirion Road, Pontlliw SA4 9DY |  
01792 882409 | [rasoiwales.co.uk](http://rasoiwales.co.uk)  
T: @RasoiWales | FB: [rasoiwales](https://www.facebook.com/rasoiwales)





THE FRESH NEW FRAGRANCES FROM

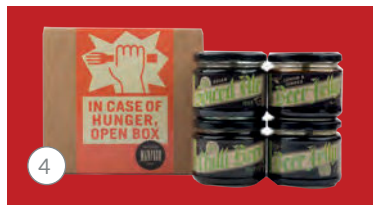
**YARDLEY**  
LONDON

[www.yardleylondon.co.uk](http://www.yardleylondon.co.uk)



THE COLLECTION

# equip & create



1. Mason Cash Terracotta tagine **£17.99** [silvermushroom.com](http://silvermushroom.com)
2. Wild & Wolf Folklore coffee pot **£19.95** [bloomsburystore.com](http://bloomsburystore.com)
3. Slate stags cheese & wine 5-piece gift set **£83** [thelongeststay.com](http://thelongeststay.com)
4. Manfood Savoury jellies gift box **£19.95** [welovemanfood.com](http://welovemanfood.com)

5. Waterford tumbler colour set **£225** [thelongeststay.com](http://thelongeststay.com)
6. Cheesemaking kit **£45** [paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk](http://paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk)
7. Maverick flavour selection - Savoury **£25** [souschef.co.uk](http://souschef.co.uk)
8. Authentic Vietnamese cooking set **£35** [souschef.co.uk](http://souschef.co.uk)
9. Cheese store gift pack **£72** [paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk](http://paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk)

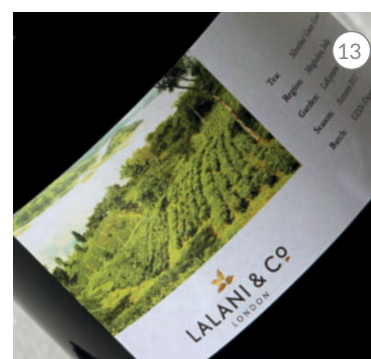
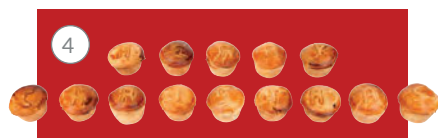
10. Alain Ducasse Build your own chocolate Christmas tree **£65** [bulgarihotels.com](http://bulgarihotels.com)
11. Zodiac tea tins set with Swarovski crystals **£110** [newbyteas.com](http://newbyteas.com)
12. Magnificent Christmas pudding **£40** [fortnumandmason.com](http://fortnumandmason.com)
13. Tescoma Delicia Christmas tree cookie cutter set **£10** [divertimenti.co.uk](http://divertimenti.co.uk)

14. Moroccan culinary gift set **£31.99** [alawala.co.uk](http://alawala.co.uk)
15. Tala Moroccan measure **£15.95** [divertimenti.co.uk](http://divertimenti.co.uk)
16. Wild & Wolf Gentleman's Hardware lunch box **£15.95** [bloomsburystore.com](http://bloomsburystore.com)



THE COLLECTION

# celebrate!

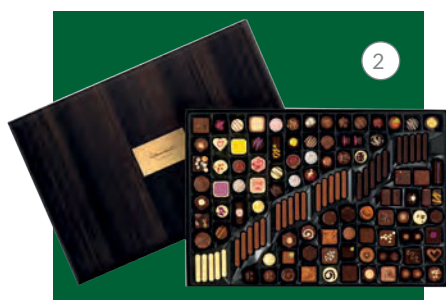


1. The East India Company Christmas coffee tin **£12.95** [eicfinefoods.com](http://eicfinefoods.com)
2. Way On Chilli chutney **£2.95** [seewoofoods.com](http://seewoofoods.com)
3. Selfridges Selection Chocolate and cherry stollen **£18.99** [selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com)
4. Selfridges Selections Timmy's Pies Savoury 'Merry Christmas' box **£19.99** [selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com)
5. Panettone tradizionale **£16.95** [carluccios.com](http://carluccios.com)
6. M'henchas stack From **£50 - £180** [themhenchacompany.co.uk](http://themhenchacompany.co.uk)
7. Ibericos Maldonado Albarragena - jamon, personal carving service, Swarovski decoration, stand, and carving knife **£1,950** [fortnumandmason.com](http://fortnumandmason.com)
8. Wedgwood Iconic Advent house [harrods.com](http://harrods.com) **£12,000**
9. Ambrosial Alchemy Christmas cake **£24.95** [fortnumandmason.com](http://fortnumandmason.com)
10. The Modern Pantry Confit watermelon rind **£4.50** [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)
11. Carved Angel Christmas pudding **£32.99** [selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com)
12. Christmas gourmet fudge collection **£6.50** [fudgekitchen.co.uk](http://fudgekitchen.co.uk)
13. LaKyrsew Garden silverleaf green tea **£32** [lalaniandco.com](http://lalaniandco.com)
14. Vasilissa Gold leaf honey **£49.95** [harrods.com](http://harrods.com)



# THE COLLECTION

# indulge



1. Chocolate almond bonbonniere **£15.50**  
[divertimenti.co.uk](http://divertimenti.co.uk)

2. Large Chocolatier's table **£100**  
[hotelchocolat.com](http://hotelchocolat.com)

3. Persian spice white chocolate bar **£7.50**  
[paulayoung.co.uk](http://paulayoung.co.uk)

4. Chococo Large Seasonal selection box **£17.95**  
[chococo.co.uk](http://chococo.co.uk)

5. Giant 3ft chocolate Christmas snowman **£75**  
[chococo.co.uk](http://chococo.co.uk)

6. Tree of Wonder **£700**  
[lamaisonduchocolat.co.uk](http://lamaisonduchocolat.co.uk)

7. Giant Christmas hamper **£95**  
[chococo.co.uk](http://chococo.co.uk)

8. Rather large cracker **£36**  
[hotelchocolat.com](http://hotelchocolat.com)

9. Demarquette Ganache selection gift box **£24.95**  
[demarquette.co.uk](http://demarquette.co.uk)

10. Paul A Young Christmas truffle collection From **£7** for a 4-piece box  
[paulayoung.co.uk](http://paulayoung.co.uk)

11. The Forrey and Galland chocolate box **£80**  
[harrods.com](http://harrods.com)

12. Festive tea and coffee spiced caramel chocolates **£19.75**  
[demarquette.co.uk](http://demarquette.co.uk)



THE COLLECTION

# imbibe



1. Champagne Nicolas Feuillate Palmes d'Or Brut Vintage in presentation case **£85** [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)
2. Tipplesworth Mince pie martini cocktail case **£185** [selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com)
3. Coole Swan Superior Irish Cream Liqueur **£22** [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)

4. Teeling Premium Poitin **£26.98** [masterofmalt.com](http://masterofmalt.com)
5. Beer Advent calendar with 25 bottles of ale **£120** [selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com)
6. Hedonist Ginger and vanilla cognac **£45** [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)
7. Holland & Holland The Dalmore Chess set **£POA** [harrods.com](http://harrods.com)

8. Fortnum's Christmas Ale **£2.90** [fortnumandmason.com](http://fortnumandmason.com)
9. Teeling Platinum reserve 30 year-old 1983 single malt whiskey **£1,339.95** [masterofmalt.com](http://masterofmalt.com)
10. Black Moth Truffle vodka **£34** [blackmothvodka.com](http://blackmothvodka.com)

11. Ophir gin **£30** [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)
12. V Gallery Marshmallow vodka fusion **£20** [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)
13. Coravin Wine access system **£269** [harrods.com](http://harrods.com)
14. Don Julio 1942 **£123** [alexanderandjames.com](http://alexanderandjames.com)



## THE COLLECTION

# share



1. Emperor's Chest hamper  
£1,000 [eicfinefoods.com](http://eicfinefoods.com)
2. Argentine Christmas hamper  
£85 [abasto.co.uk](http://abasto.co.uk)

3. The Mayfair hamper £500  
[paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk](http://paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk)
4. The Boxing Day hamper £90  
[fortnumandmason.com](http://fortnumandmason.com)

5. Il Massimo hamper £75  
[carluccios.com](http://carluccios.com)
6. The Perfect Provenance  
hamper £5,000 [harrods.com](http://harrods.com)

7. Truffle Hunter Complete  
truffle hamper £64.99  
[selfridges.com](http://selfridges.com)





## THE COLLECTION win!

### 1. Paul A Young Christmas 2014 collection chocolates

Paul's Christmas collection allows you to build your own box, containing from 4 to 42 truffles – and we've got a box of 9 to give away. This year, the chocolatier has combined his traditional approach to sourcing fine British ingredients with exotic Persian inspirations and a slice of classic Americana. [paulayoung.co.uk](http://paulayoung.co.uk)

### 2. Hedonist Ginger and vanilla cognac

Winter calls for something warming in the glass, and Hedonist's smooth, sippable tippie is just that. The sleek black vessel will look good as good in your drinks cabinet as it does on Harvey Nichols' shelves; and we have a bottle to offer to one very lucky reader. [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)

### 3. Carluccio's Il Massimo hamper

Italian restaurant and ingredient emporium Carluccio's never lets you down at Christmas. This year, the store has given us the opportunity to treat one lucky reader to this statement red box generously packed with some of Carluccio's most iconic products, perfect for adding an Italian accent to your festivities. [carluccios.com](http://carluccios.com)

### 4. The Modern Pantry Confit watermelon rind

Anyone who's eaten at The Modern Pantry will appreciate chef Anna Hansen's inimitable magpie approach to drawing together global flavours and ingredients. Harvey Nichols is offering one reader the chance to win a jar of The Modern Pantry's Confit watermelon rind – perfect for cold cuts or on the cheeseboard. [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)

### 5. The East India Company Christmas coffee tin

The East India Company's suave 'Director's Blend' is the base for this cleverly-flavoured coffee, which boasts added notes of hazelnut, cinnamon and chocolate to the already-smooth, warming and well-rounded drink contained within this elegant clip-top tin. We have one to give away. [eicfinefoods.com](http://eicfinefoods.com)

### 6. Chococo Large Seasonal selection box

Dorset-based Chococo constantly reveals innovative flavour combinations which celebrate seasonality, often utilising the wares of small local artisan producers. This fresh selection of 25 chocolates and truffles – many of them award-winning – will have one lucky reader positively welcoming winter. [chococo.co.uk](http://chococo.co.uk)

### 7. SeeWoo £25 shopping voucher, Way-On Chilli Chutney and Yummyto Japanese soy sauce

If Douglas Blyde's Chinatown piece has given you an appetite for all things Oriental, our SeeWoo competition is for you. The ingredients specialist is offering one winner a £25 voucher to be spent online or instore, along with award-winning products: Way-On Chilli chutney and Yummyto Japanese soy sauce. [seewoo.com](http://seewoo.com)

**8. Ophir Oriental Spiced Gin** The unusual spices and botanicals in Ophir's gin make it one of the most unique examples of the spirit that we've encountered. We'd love you to try it, too, so we convinced Harvey Nichols to put aside a bottle for one of our readers. [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)

### 9. Demarquette Ganache selection gift box

The ornate chocolates and pralines in the smart black 16-piece gift box that we have to give away look every bit as good as they taste – and that's saying something! Marc Demarquette scours the globe for the most unusual, exceptional ingredients, but is also deeply passionate about celebrating British produce. [demarquette.co.uk](http://demarquette.co.uk)

### 10. V Gallery Marshmallow vodka fusion

Harvey Nichols stocks a lot of cutting edge comestibles – like this unique drink which combines an authentic toasted marshmallow taste with smooth spirit. We liked it so much we wangled a bottle to share with one of you as a prize. [harveynichols.com](http://harveynichols.com)

To enter any and all of these fantastic competitions, and for terms & conditions, simply email [competitions@goodthingsmagazine.com](mailto:competitions@goodthingsmagazine.com).

Deadline for entries is 22/01/15. Winners will be announced on 29/01/15. Good Luck!





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